TRANSITION IN CHURCH LEADERSHIP: FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION

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ABSTRACT

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This project was designed to address the issues and dynamics facing churches during transition in leadership. The project was implemented at the Marsalis Avenue Church of Christ in Dallas, Texas. Ten consecutive, weekly sessions were developed and implemented with a group of volunteers to ascertain their attitudes concerning the structure of transition from old to new. This model's instruments (e.g., literature, sermons and seminars) can be utilized by other congregations to chart the course of healthy and effective transition. In other words, some churches may find possible solutions as well as situations to avoid in order to create an atmosphere for positive and lasting transitions. It is also worth noting, the pre and post test results disclosed that the instruments used proved to be persuasive tools in changing the attitudes and apprehensions persons had about transition in church leadership.

Acknowledgments

We are only able to soar to the academic mountaintop Dr. King spoke and dreamed of, because of so many spiritual and earthly trailblazers in the generations and centuries gone by. The inspiration of many greatly contributed to this body of work. First and always, I acknowledge God for placing people with purpose in my vision. They include the following:

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- To all of the young men in Rights of Passage, who graciously and sacrificially shared their instructor with academia.
- To my friends, who to a large extent, have been neglected during this project, but never wavered in their support.
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- My comrades in the struggle and search for "Social Justice In The Name Of Jesus".
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- I further express affectionate appreciation for the tolerance and patience of my closest female friend, Joyce King-Richardson. During the most significant times, she stood by, hours upon hours, as I finished this manuscript.
- Finally, thanks goes to the faculty and staff of United Theological Seminary for their kindness during period.

Dedication

This labor of love is dedicated to my mother in the hope that she will find strength, joy and rejuvenation for her journey on. As her only son, I am proud to live out her educational dream.

INTRODUCTION

"....And a little child shall lead them"[1]

(Is. 11:6)

Is it not ironic that a precious little baby, wrapped in swaddling clothing would come to symbolize the ultimate in global transitional leadership? He, Lord of Lords, King of Kings and the Prince of Peace, had to die to inherit his mantle. That mantle is passed every single day, every hour, minute and second that time is. That is because Christ, our Lord and Savior, makes the mantle of salvation available to all. Every year, in some form or fashion, around the world, Christians celebrate the greatest single Holy event known to humankind—the birth of that little child, chosen to lead.

Even today, perhaps the best kind of leader is the wise man or woman able to maintain enough of the innocence of a child to lead like a responsible adult. A person called to the service of the Lord must possess a unique amount of sensitivity and compassion that will enable him or her to relate to a variety of people, places and events. Those designated to take up the baton will almost certainly need to remember what life was like for them as a child. Why? Because like childhood, leadership develops over stages. [2]

Ironically, as a new leader, a person is in the first phase, or infancy, of their desired

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[1] Unless otherwise noted, all scriptures quoted by this author will be from the King James Version of the Bible.

[2] Robert D. Dale, *Pastoral Leadership*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1986), pp. 215-224.

growth. Each stage must equip men and women who are called to another level of their growth. Over a series of critical situations and reflective thoughts, potential leaders and leaders set for transition, can chart their own rite of passage from infant, to toddler, to theological adolescent, young adult, and finally to the graduate phase. It is incumbent upon these individuals to never forget how to relate to those they will serve, as well as how to exercise patience with the generation that has paved the way for their present course.

This paper is designed to take one on a passionate and reflective journey that will ultimately lead to what transition in church leadership is all about, from one generation to the next. Examples will be provided of both the successful, and unsuccessful models. These will be preceded by the personal model of this writer's own recent transition. It is the sincere hope of this writer that others may be able to utilize this paper as a teaching tool that may perhaps help them to overcome some of the potential problems that occur during, preceding, and after, a transition. Robert D. Dale, in his work entitled *Pastoral Leadership*, puts it like this: "Ministry start-up is pivotal. Not only does start-up set the tone for later ministry, it can also become the occasion for several ministerial sins."[1] Just as some of the problems are noted, possible solutions are suggested that may aid others in the quest for smoother, more effective transitions in church leadership.

One theme that runs consistently over the next few chapters is the ability to merge, or unite. But if a leader in transition is unable to merge all of the phases of his/her own

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[1] Ibid., p. 169.

growth cycle to become a complete leader, it is foolish to expect the people being led will be able to adapt, adjust and accept the larger merger of various groups and cliques into one body. This writer very well remembers and cherishes life as a child, a hard-headed teen, a young man at the knee of his grandmother and, most importantly, life in a family of women. These kinds of life transitions are necessary for the growth of any future leader. Perhaps the merging of all these characteristics shape how well a future leader can take on the problems and personalities of those he or she must serve. This writer knows the pregnant teen, because his sister was one. This writer knows and understands the wise and aged, because that generation helped raise him. This writer knows the happiness of childhood, because a child still lives deep in him. This writer can relate to married people and singles, because this writer is both—married to the lambs in his care, and single, meaning without wife.

This project, is therefore, designed to totally address the transitional process as a whole, to make certain it does not overshadow the transition, which is, more important. The little child who succeeds in leading his/her group will be more readily identified with Christ than any other. What better transition could a religious leader possibly want to emulate? His mantle is available to any, and all. As descendants and prophets, leaders today are called to share it with the world. We are God's children. "....And a little child shall lead them."[2]

In Chapter One, the focus will zero in on why change is necessary and how forces of good and evil work *separately,* and together, to bring about that change. The particular model

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[2] Isaiah 11:6.

chosen, Transition In Church Leadership: From Generation to Generation, was selected because the author has only recently experienced this exciting phenomenon, one that very little documentation exists in modern, religious circles. Everything prior to the transition this writer is now in the midst of has been to prepare and equip the writer with the necessary abilities to tackle the subject of transition in church leadership. Naturally, this subject is of great importance to the writer, not only because of the heartache, joy and pain, associated with his personal model, but also because others may be able to follow with less suffering, and a greater understanding. If this writer had not lived, witnessed, researched and studied the biblical and historical models of transition in leadership, he surely would have faltered at the appointed time he was to receive his own mantle.

Chapter II will deal exclusively with a variety of writings on the transitional process, and on the different philosophical concepts related to the subject. Certainly much exists on the subject of leadership in general. Look in any encyclopedia and you can find comparisons of leadership in relation to government, sports, community, military and family. Leadership models are all around us. They have been from the very beginning of time. But there seems to be a vacuum when the subject of transition in *church* leadership is the primary subject or focus. This is actually a surprise because churches are always going through the process of transition[3] when one considers particular factors for it, including

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[3] Dale, p. 169. Dale quotes two itinerant pastors reflecting on their recent transfers to new congregations: "I made some mistakes during start-up that plagued me for the entire eleven years of my ministry there. I'm wiser about start-up now and hope I will not repeat my past error here," stated a new Missouri pastor. A young Methodist pastor noted, "I must understand the possibilities and perils of start-up. I'll probably repeat the start-up process seven or eight times during my ministry." Ministers who serve in denominations with a call system (as opposed to an appointive system) may spend as much as 30 to 50 percent of their overall ministries doing start-up work.

death, scandal, retirement, promotion and illness. Transition in church leadership is a subject certainly worth studying. In this author's opinion, however, only a few, like Dale,[4] Finzel[5] and Friedman[6] have adequately researched, analyzed and/or critiqued this very important area that is essential to the health and future of churches.

In Chapter III, the writer will attempt to give the biblical and theological framework for the project. In other words, this chapter discusses, in some detail, the dynamics and nuances of transition in leadership, found in the bible. It also discusses how God, the godly, and even the ungodly, impact this critical process. The two models of transition in leadership are as follows: the first deals with the transition between David and Saul. In this model, the writer will critique the process and demonstrate unequivocally what should be avoided in the process that might impede a successful transition. The second model, deals with the transition between Elijah and Elisha. It is not used to critique, but to emulate as a paradigm, demonstrating what steps could be taken to ensure a healthier and less problematic transition.

In Chapter IV the actual methods used to select these particular three models is outlined. The personal model is used because of relevant issues that accompanied the transition, and secondly, cohorts, a number of parishioners and co-leaders in the church, seemed to be ill-

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[4] Ibid.

[5] Hans Finzel, *The Top Ten Mistakes Leaders Make*, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Brooks, 1984).

[6] Edwin H. Friedman, *Generation To Generation: Family Process In Church And Synagogue* (New York/London: Guilford Press, 1985).

equipped and uninformed to deal with the present situation. After the physical transition was complete, the real work was only beginning. This writer saw the need to develop classes, sermons, share literature and conduct personal therapy sessions for those members trying to cope with something they did not understand—transition in church leadership. At the end of these classes and sermons, the writer then focused on whether there were attitudinal or ideological changes in those persons who participated in any of the aforementioned.

Chapter V deals fundamentally with field experience. It includes data collected, the methods in which the data was collected, and the analysis of the data collected. It also details the attitudinal changes, discovered in the context associates and himself. It attempts to do this systematically and responsibly. The classes, discussions and sermons and literature on this project proved to be helpful instruments in changing the attitudes and perspectives of the participants. The field experience proved invaluable because it ignited conversation and dialogue beyond the class, that spilled over into the congregation. It proved that the methods utilized were effective in changing minds and hearts and it created and strengthened the relationship between the context associates and the minister.

Chapter VI will summarize this author's subjective and objective opinions about transition in church leadership. In this chapter, issues concerning pros and cons will be succinctly, but systematically outlined. Then, reflections concerning the entire project will be reiterated in an effort to drive home the significance of this undertaking. The author will

also review possible solutions contained in the model for use by churches in leadership transition. And finally, a helpful illustration from sports will be utilized to consummate the entire project. We will demonstrate how transition in church leadership, like a relay team, takes cooperation, patience and dedication, as well as mutual trust and respect.

CHAPTER ONE - MINISTRY FOCUS

My Transition

The church is the body of Christ, a chosen race, a royal priesthood, or holy nation, God's own people.[1] To identify the church with the people is to also bear witness to its essential human character and its ties with the human race.[2] But the church, or ecclesia, is more than an institution, but also an organism, since it is actually a living body.[3] As with any individual body, there must be a head or a leader to give direction, sustenance, encouragement and verbal expression that communicate the unspoken desires of the body.[4] The head must also be willing to provide spiritual and emotional nourishment for those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, justice and liberation. But at the same time, the head must remember he or she is delivering God's word, not their own and that the very beginning started with the ultimate head—Jesus.[5] There is only one supreme and eternal head, the one who hung, bled and died for the church. But His representatives, or earthly heads, must continue to lead his body of believers despite the efforts of some leaders to rid themselves of 'undesirables'. The church itself, even today, remains a community, a mixture of good and bad. It is not the leader's job to sort out who belongs

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[1] 1Peter 2:9.

[2] John Macquarrie, *Principles of Christian Theology*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons), p. 387.

[3] 1Corinthians 12:12-31.

[4] Max Weber, *The Sociology of Religion*, translated by Ephraim Fischoff (Canada: S.J. Reginald Saunders and Company, 1963), pp. 64-71.

[5] Dale, p.170.

in the body, and who does not. God will tend to the sorting out duties at the end of history.[1]

Since the very beginning of time, the church itself has been associated with a number of metaphors, particularly the body of Christ, the temple of the Holy Spirit, the new Jerusalem, the new Israel, the household of God, the bride of Christ. One metaphor that stands out is that of an army called to do battle with the forces of evil. The church, too, is an army called out of the world to do battle with its fiercest enemy—Satan. God's mighty army has always had brave and valiant soldiers fighting for God's purposes, principles and promises, but leaders must remember that Satan also, over the centuries, has amassed a small army of his/her own. As part of the devil's network of imps and pimps, every trick and treacherous deception above hell will be utilized to tear down God's leader. But Satan, alas, is no match for God, for the master has always had soldiers on the front line, as well as generals leading his powerful army to victory....generals like Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Other generals that come to mind include Peter, James and John, as well as Titus and Timothy, and Paul and Silas, who served as vagabonds and visionaries leading the people of God. It is a historical fact and a biblical truth that the church has always had qualified leaders. In fact, the author of Ephesians, maintains that God "gave some apostles, others prophets, and still others, pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry and for the edifying of the body of Christ."[2] The aforementioned statement shows unequivocally and unmistakably, that the church has been

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[1] Alan Richardson and John Bowden, *The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Theology* (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1983), p. 1.

[2] Ephesians 4:11-12.

given gifted leaders to unify and strengthen the army of God. Along with that, there have been shift changes that indicate when it was time for one leader's tour of duty to end, and another's to begin. For instance, the biblical transitions in church leadership can be found in the passage just read....as the leadership baton was passed from Jesus to the apostles, from the apostles to the prophets, and now from the prophets to the evangelists, pastors and teachers. These are the universal transitions in the church's leadership, but there have been transitions that are more particular and local. There was a shift from John the Baptist to Jesus, from Peter to Mark, and from Paul to Timothy. These are but a few examples of how the church has perpetuated the promises and principles of the Prince of Peace for every person that is a pilgrim on this planet. Now let us consider the modern, local paradigm of transition in church leadership which is a significant component of this project—that is the shift from Grover C. Washington to Ervin D. Seamster, Jr.

Personal Transition: From Washington to Seamster

First and foremost, it has become very urgent that we address transition in church leadership because the subject is an everyday phenomenon that impacts the heart and soul of an individual church body, as well as the communities they exist in, including global, national and, as just stated, local. Because this writer has experienced many of the components, positive and negative, of the actual transitional process and the transition itself, a greater insight on the possible pitfalls and problem areas are more available for discussion. As stated in the Spiritual Autobiography, everything in this writer's life of service, provided a second skin, a religious skin, if you will, to help survive one of the

most difficult challenges faced by this learning tree—one that he continues to face, as the storm rages on. In the *Ministry Context* paper, this writer proudly stated that "if Grover Washington, his mentor, had not believed in him, he would not be standing beside him, growing, watching, waiting, and ready to die for what he believes."[3] This writer's readiness to accept the torch, or baton, was further stated, only if that was God's will. Now that the mantle has been passed, the writer has made mental notes in his heart that can only be erased by God. Questions that must be addressed in this personal model are hardly unique to this one situation. Why did some parts of the body leave? Why did others get ill? What is the prescription or cure for the ones who stay, but continue to infect or poison others? What can be done to strengthen the resolve of supporters who cherish and respect the order of God's call and the shift in transitional leadership?

Historical Analysis

Before we describe the transition from Washington to Seamster, let us pause here and give a description of the context in which it took place. More than sixty years ago, another generation of African descendants gathered in North Dallas to form what is now the Marsalis Avenue Church of Christ (MACC). The struggling congregation only numbered a few, but the close-knit kinship that developed over the years under the leadership of men like P. Thomas Brown and Robert Crawford, flourished into many. If not for the support system provided each other by our original members, we would not be working today with over fifty ministries, not only for our benefit, but also for community.

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[3] This quote was taken from "Ministry Context" paper, August 1996, p.10.

From North Dallas, the location of the church changed three times. And even to this date, it is important to note, Dallas' first settler, John Neely Bryan, built his log cabin near the Trinity River, (1841) and the two sides of Dallas (North and South of the Trinity) have been largely segregated since. In 1974, The Lawrence and Marder Church of Christ moved to the heart of historic Oak Cliff (south of the Trinity), and became known as the Marsalis Avenue Church of Christ. This historic area where the church lives and breathes, was actually first settled by Samuel, Robert and James Sloan before 1845. Sam Sloan's house, which was built in 1846, is a landmark on Ledbetter Drive. Before it was Oak Cliff, the neighborhood where Marsalis Avenue is located was once known as Hord's Ridge. These facts are vitally important because they demonstrate an independence that Oak Cliff has become famous for. Today, there is a political move to separate Oak Cliff and let it again stand apart from the city of Dallas. Many question whether this is a sound move, especially with the current decline in this potentially, powerful neighborhood. For now though, the average value of a home in this area (75216) is $23,525. This amount is close to three times lower than the average home value for the city of Dallas--$60,443. Economically speaking, most business and civic leaders consider this area problem-plagued and a challenge because of its lower income level. The challenge MACC members, both old and new face, is one that seeks to turn this downward spiral around through economic opportunity and Christian love. Past leaders at Marsalis have cautioned some of the present elders and deacons, that if we stay in Oak Cliff, the church may suffer an image problem. Since we do not anticipate a move tomorrow, we should be about the business of changing that negative image anyway. An investment in souls will follow us

wherever we go. And we have the physical, mental and spiritual fortitude to answer the challenge!

Believers and Building

MACC's membership today numbers more than 800 active. Almost 99 percent of the church is African-American. That makes us, without a doubt, a black church.[4] Some mistakenly believe this is a label they must shy away from in order to attract a more professional, sophisticated crowd. But at Marsalis, a unique balance exists, one that includes the professional and the blue-collar worker, the well-to-do and those below America's so-called poverty line. However, the median income for MACC (Marsalis Avenue Church of Christ) members is $45,000. For a single parent, that drops to $25,000. These are only averages. Some are higher, others lower. But this is a point that has to be made when you consider the figures from the 1990 census report compared to the figures of the MACC study during the same time period. Surprisingly, this comparison revealed that the median income of African Americans in the city of Dallas was lower than the incomes for MACC members. In addition to our unique balance of professionals and working class members, we also have a strong base of families who have raised their children here. More than 140 members have been at MACC for over twenty years. Another eighty members have labored with the family ten-nineteen years. These are the people and families that have been able to reach out to the newest members, who have all

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[4] C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African-American Experience*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990).

been with the church less than nine years.

As stated above, on March 31, 1974, the congregation acquired and moved into its present facilities at 2431 South Marsalis Avenue. The cost for this building was $295,000.00. Since that time, many improvements and pride in ownership has put the replacement value at more than two and one half million dollars. In the weeks that followed the acquisition of this property, from April 1, 1974 to December 31, 1974, the congregation experienced a 20 percent increase in membership. One of the reasons for this tremendous growth was location. The church is located off I-35 (East Illinois and Marsalis). This continues to be one of the busiest areas in Dallas. While the church has had both decline and peak periods, the surrounding neighborhood has only known one trend: downward. According to Dallas County statistics, the residential population of this community decreased by about 5 percent in the 1970s, while the city of Dallas enjoyed an increase of more than 7 percent. In 1970, the combined black and Hispanic population for the area was approximately 89 percent In 1980, that shot up to 97 percent Almost 39 percent of the community residents rent their living quarters, while the rate for the city of Dallas is 52 percent Median family income is $17,351, a much-lower figure than the Dallas average of almost $24,000. Many of the occupations for people in this area include administrative, clerical support and blue-collar. So, when one of the largest shopping centers in the neighborhood, Targets, announced it would close, the economic impact only speeded up the deterioration even more. And Targets is not the only major business development to exit. Many more have since followed, making it harder to attract new concerns. And most of the future leaders who earn the necessary tools to help re-define

church and community, leave the community for greener pastures. In 1970, only 40 percent of the area's residents possessed high school diplomas. By 1980 statistics, 56 percent received more than twelve years of school, still lower than the city of Dallas. (69 percent) But the most startling figure shows only five percent of the residents, under the age of twenty-five, have four or more years of college education, compared to 22 percent throughout the city. These facts leave the church with much work to be done, right in its own backyard! Traditionally, members have come from all over Dallas County to worship, and continue to be scattered out, but the bulk of the membership continues to dwell in the southern sector of the county. Our facilities include more than forty classrooms, nine restrooms, four offices, two nurseries, two kitchens, a library, two large conference rooms and a spacious, multi-purpose room. MACC has been blessed with enormous growth and the boundless potential for more. Just as a biological family begins its journey, each precious church family member is a reason for celebration. As a family in Christ, it is important to love and care for new babes in the faith, as well as extend a hand to the community. If love can not be demonstrated within (church), it can hardly be demonstrated without (community). One of the best examples of this kind of growth, as a result of outreach efforts, occurred during MACC's growth heyday period. From 1976 to 1981, Dr. Washington delivered lengthy and challenging sermons, as he urged community and congregation to 'think big'. In 1980, the "Mod Squad" `program was established to call on and make personal visits to the homes of new members, visitors and less active members. In 1980 alone, 100 souls accepted Jesus as their personal savior. This had never happened before in the history of the Marsalis Avenue Church of Christ, and has

only been surpassed once. (Note: In 1996, we received 121 new members into our fellowship. Needless to say, this congregational growth seems to be on the rise again.) As members applaud the efforts of church leaders and this author critiques the past, one cannot afford to ignore the shortcomings. Cornel West puts it this way:

> Secular folk would call this "criticism"; we Christians can call it the love ethic in its pedagogic mode. For its aim is to empower us to better serve the kingdom of God, its motivation is to aid and abet us in our becoming fuller Christians despite our faults and blindnesses. [5]

From 1982 to 1986, the highly-acclaimed "Mod Squad" program fell by the wayside, after its founder, Ray Christopher resigned his position at Marsalis. Christopher, an innovative, dedicated young man left out of sheer frustration at the pace at which his ideas (proven winners) were developed and instituted. The timing could not have been more devastating and detrimental for the church. That same year, 1982, Brother Washington fell ill and was forced to miss more than four months. Just two years earlier, in 1980, Washington had written a long-range proposal on congregational goals. Ironically, the author of that ambitious document could not know his absence, the absence of a great leader, would have an enormous impact on the direction, enthusiasm and self-esteem of the church. During this critical period, most MACC Christians just struggled to keep themselves afloat, unable to swim out to anyone drowning in the community.

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[5] Cornel West, *Prophetic Fragments*, (Michigan/New Jersey: Eerdmans/Africa World Press, Inc., 1988), p. 279.

So as community began to be swallowed up by even more gangs, more drugs, more murders, the church suffered too. Several factors contributed to the decline in growth, including the lack of any systematic leadership, misplaced priorities, poor management and the refusal to demonstrate an open-mindedness to change outmoded, outdated traditions. Despite the fact that some of MACC's oldest and dearest members were in a state of religious depression over the loss of unfulfilled dreams, there were soldiers, working internally, to keep the light burning. This writer will be the first to admit, by all indications, that light almost went out, as key players sat passively by out of fear and frustration at not knowing what to do to turn things around. These key players included some of the original leadership selected in 1963. Four men, Willie J. Hooper, Miller L. Jones, Johnson McGilbra and S.W. Washington, were all ordained as elders. When Jones passed away in 1981, eight deacons were appointed to help those four originally chosen in 1963. Today, Ernest Wyrick, Harold Cannon and Jewel Manzay have been elevated to the status of elder from their positions as deacons. Our current deacons are Johnny Moore, Jacob Polk, Richard Thomas, Winfred George and Aaron Loftis. The elders have a tremendous responsibility in making decisions for the congregation, overseeing budget concerns, as well as setting forth yearly goals for Marsalis. Our deacons, are a dedicated support system for this minister and the elders. They believe that they can depend on us. In the recent Marsalis past, a breakdown in communication between deacons and elders, deacons and deacons, and finally, deacons and ministers, caused tension, division and an air of disharmony. The church did, and always will suffer when the right hand is not aware of what the left is doing. One of the critical reasons the church was in such a serious slump

originated with a feeling that many members were limited in outreach, educational and community ministries. At one of the low points in Marsalis history, the deacon ministry was left to wither on the vine. These men should not only be equipped to act as that support system, but be able to "run things" on a temporary basis, so that the work of many years does not fall apart in a few short months. In the case of Brother Washington, once he was strong again, an in-house ministry, the Family Care program, brought new life to Marsalis.

In 1984, the groundwork was laid to develop interpersonal relationships with members, as well as strengthen their souls through fellowship more than just one day a week. Two years later, in June, 1986, Dr. Kenneth Greene submitted a proposal to introduce members to his "small groups" concept. Greene believed many members remained strangers because of their once-a-week philosophy of fellowship on Sundays, and he sought to change that with an ten-week training seminar for potential small group leaders. These leaders, 34 of them, would be trained and prepared to take on eight to twelve lambs. The Word is filled with examples of how small groups conquered gigantic problems. Jesus called 12 men to follow Him.[6] In Matthew's gospel, one of the most quoted scriptures in history comes from the King himself : "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midist of them."[7] Greene's proposal was finally approved by the elders, and this ambitious proposal can be credited with helping turn the decline in the church around.

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[6] Mark 3:14.
[7] Mt. 18:20.

As stated, many with evangelistic gifts, like Greene and Christopher, preceded present ministers, G.C. Washington, and this author. In order to press full strength, it is important to always remember and pay homage to those who paved the way. And though, Brother Washington's name may not sit beside the Trinity the way John Bryan's does, it is on the lips and in the hearts of all who cherish the legacy he will ultimately leave. After more than forty years in the ministry as a preacher, teacher, friend and keeper of the flock, Brother Washington fully retired at the end of 1995. Mixed emotions filled the hearts of many now that he has stepped down. Furthermore, this pioneer is among only a few lions whose roar will be heard long after he has left the scene. For it was Grover C. Washington who authored the original charter for Southwestern Christian College (SWCC), the only school totally supported by African American money, sanctioned by the black churches of Christ. It was then-Dean Washington, just one of the many hats he has worn over the years, who tirelessly worked to put SWCC on the academic map. And members at MACC will tell you that for twenty, thirty, or the entire forty years they have known him, Brother Washington has been, and will die, an activist and a believer in our youth. In 1966, the church started its first multiple staff ministry. This included a Minister of Religious Education, Hubert Hartin. Two youth ministers, James Bradley and Ernest Wyrick, proved to be good investments in the children's future. Not long ago, Brother Washington preached a sermon in which he repeatedly asked the congregation what they saw when they saw a child. The point was well taken from the parable about the lad with the five loaves and two fishes, and how it fed the multitude of thousands. We must not only leave a legacy for young black boys and girls, we must nurture and prepare them to take over their roles in the church. If Brother Washington had not believed in that philosophy, truly

this author would not be his successor. At this point, let us pause here and discuss what events and/or circumstances led up to the transition between Washington and Seamster. When Seamster first came to the Marsalis Avenue Church of Christ in the summer of 1991, he was fulfilling his internship requirement for his degree plan. Although he was an intern and was not given many responsibilities from the congregation, he was very involved in the activities and programs of the church. He fit in very well with the leaders and staff of the congregation. He took very well with the both elder and younger members. Although the congregation supported him in his educational pursuits, it was obvious they were saddened when his internship period came to an end. So, it was only natural for the elders to consider him when they were searching for an associate minister to work with the congregation.

Unlike other denominations, the churches of Christ are self-governing, autonomous bodies who select their own elders, deacons, and ministers. The Bible gives certain qualifications for these roles, but the final selection is the discretion of the members.[8] In other words, the members of the local congregation decide ultimately whether or not the person under consideration is one that they can love, respect and trust. To that end, Bro. Seamster was selected to serve as the associate minister and he came to work full-time for the congregation in January of 1992.

His duties and responsibilities naturally increased once he became the associate minister. The transition from intern to minister was very natural for both Seamster and the

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[8] I Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:1-9.

congregation. He preached more frequently and with each sermon he became more at ease with his audience. Consequently, the members became increasingly more comfortable and he became a part of the very close-knit church family.

Over the next three years, Seamster's name became synonymous with Marsalis Avenue Church of Christ. As with any church, the lives of her members were filled with various births and deaths, marriages and divorces, and even triumphs and tragedies. In many of these cases, the members sought Seamster for advice, counseling and guidance. To the younger members, he is considered a role model. To his peers, he is a friend. For the elder members, he is like a son or grandson.

When the senior minister announced that he was retiring at the end of 1995, the elders did not hesitate in having Seamster succeed him as minister. A decision that could have been difficult and worrisome for the elders was much easier because of the confidence they had in Seamster. They, therefore, concluded he had proven himself worthy of the responsibility to lead the 800 person congregation. While he was content to follow in the footstep of his predecessor and mentor, he brought new vision and energy to this position. The membership was naturally cautious of having a new senior minister because of their love and admiration for his mentor.

Now that the mantle has been passed from Washington to Seamster, the issues that currently face this young minister, this young leader would have never occurred to him before the physical transition. For, quite simply, none of the unimaginable things had even

a thought in daily planning for a hope-filled future that this writer could not wait to plunge, or leap into. Little did this writer know, that leap of faith would turn into a mountain of fear. The reason so little is known about this particular subject is that, in the writer's opinion, a void or vacuum exists that does not exactly invite critical thinking and thoughtful research. In short, it is not a pretty, or delicate subject, not for the weak or faint-hearted. Imagine, if you will, each individual that experiences a transition in church leadership, from generation to generation. That means from senior to junior, from old to new, and most importantly, from then, to now. And what this writer found most frightening about the now is, how many otherwise brave people found the now a strange and fearful place. If one is familiar with the phrase, 'fear of the unknown', perhaps one can then get an inkling of a clue as to the behavior of members of a once, mildly-comfortable body, with a brand, new head.

As this writer began to take notes of the commotion being raised all around him, that is when it actually pained him to think others might be going through the exact same perplexities, even though each person's situation is different and unique. But surely, some commonality is present, because all transitions in church leadership include some of the same components. Could it be the basics in each case scenario are the ties that bind? If others are being made, forced, or willing to tip toe through this fragile process without a model or paradigm, then it is time, this writer believes, to initiate some dialogue and discussion on the topic. Not one second will this writer try to get you to believe that he was, or is a victim in all of this. But, certainly "when God calls a man[sic], he[sic] bids

him[sic] come and die."[9] When a leader understands and accepts a lifelong challenge of this nature, you may be sure, the call includes an unwritten code that one grows, as one suffers. One must, as this writer's grandmother would say, learn to wither the storm. How did this writer survive what turned out to be his transitional hurricane? A good amount of therapy has been the development of this project which has granted this writer the freedom to document and research, as well as the release that has enabled him to share mistakes, so that others might possibly learn from them. Along with encouragement from mentors and members of the writer's peer group, solid emotional and spiritual support has made it possible to devote months to this precious undertaking which is now laid out for public consumption. Truly, this unique experience of personal transition, from one generation to another, has given the writer a new voice on an old subject that has been buried, or ignored far too long. Exactly what makes the writer qualified to be such a voice? Let us pause here and remember some of the key points from the Spiritual Autobiography and Synergy.

The issues that have impacted the church during a transition in leadership from generation to generation are not new. Taken out of context, members should be trained to recognize these same controversial issues that affect and attract our attention in everyday life. Concerns include: fear of the unknown, uncertainty about the future, jealousy and other emotions, and finally, political jockeying for position. Certainly, these familiar thoughts, deeds and positions are known to us within the realm of family, career and relationships. Why, then, when one enters the religious realm, are they more likely than not, to

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[9] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, (New York: Collier Books/Macmillan

disassociate the aforementioned to the House of God? That is the place, unfortunately, where these negatives exist on a higher level. They not only exist, they breed and reproduce. Is not it amazing that any positive and effective work gets done? Is not S(he) amazing? That is something this writer knows firsthand—that without God's presence during the personal transition discussed here, the process would have crumbled, or been further behind than where it is. God supplies all our needs, and to some, God has extended gifts earmarked for certain uses. Long ago, growing up in a rough neighborhood in Shreveport, Louisiana, this writer struggled as most ghetto children did, and do. For young, black boys, athletics were, and is, a way out. One of God's first physical gifts to this writer was the ability to run, jump and shoot a basketball. Little did this writer know, those same skills would benefit him during a more important period in his life—the transition in MACC's leadership, from spiritual father, to son.

Teamwork is not a new concept to the writer. Running up and down the court, whether it was a real game, or practice in the gym, gave this writer the foundation to help appreciate a high level of work ethic, cooperation, support, and yes, teamwork. Being a life-long athlete from the street court to the college court, where this athlete played a dedicated

game and endured, no, welcomed many transitions, have helped to prepare the writer for his ultimate transition. More on this subject will be addressed in Chapter IV. For now though, let us remember it is next to impossible to face a transition in church leadership as a loner, or a one-(wo)man team. There are no superwomen, or supermen. Everyone

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Publishing Company,1937), p.99.

involved in such an all-consuming experience must have help, must have support, must demand teamwork, and understand the need to cultivate it long before one's game plan is in trouble. And even when one is equipped with a relatively trouble-free game plan, other unexpected surprises and disappointments will crop up, usually in the form of distractions and roadblocks to that smooth and successful transition that one may crave. But, hustle, even in the crunch, can pay off. These are the little things that Christ the coach reminds us of through study, through reflection, and definitely, through prayer. All of these things, separately, and in concert, greatly aided the writer in his transition. But when it was time to research the problem, a startling revelation deeply troubled this author. Why was there almost no information on transition in church leadership, specifically from generation to generation? Let us discuss this deeper in the very next chapter. Before we conclude Chapter I, the author must reiterate the importance of transition in church leadership, not only to him personally, but also to every congregation that has faced, or will face in the future, a transition that might have the potential to hurt, or to help, or sadly, both. The perspective this author brings on that subject can be utilized to avoid pitfalls as one reaches for peaks. This perspective is growing, and on-going. Even as this documentation is being recorded, a greater understanding and an encyclopedic knowledge seems boundless. This must be shared. That, which this writer, has no doubt. As stated in the Spiritual Autobiography, God never intended for this writer to achieve several degrees of higher learning, and then just hang them on the wall. Those degrees, that knowledge, belongs to the community. This model of ministry, belongs to the world-at-large. And truly, if it can help one congregation to better understand, cope with and survive transition from generation to generation, then one of God's missions for this writer will have been

served. This writer's greatest wish in connection with this project, is that other leaders about to enter a transitional phase will study what is here, then continue to ask questions, and above all, pray.[10]

[10] Dale, pp.192-193.

CHAPTER TWO

THE STATE OF THE ART IN

Transition in Church Leadership

As briefly mentioned in Chapter I, this writer made a startling revelation at the onset of this particular project. First and foremost, very little exists, in the written word, from today's scholars and theologians on the subject of transitional leadership. In the research done for this project, a great deal could be found of leadership in general, and even on leadership values and techniques. Further one could argue, scores of books and papers were easily found on church leadership.[1] But when the focus deepened to transition in church leadership, that's when this author began to hit an academic brick wall. (Note: The work done by Dale, Finzel, Gregory, and Friedman were all very helpful.) Let us take it a step further and examine the specific subject of transition in church leadership—from generation to generation and a big void, becomes so massive it is hard to begin to fill it with words. Yet, this writer knew, to attempt to fill the void, one must begin the journey of a thousand miles, with a single step. Early on, it must be stated that this is not the final word on transition in church leadership, but this is a start, hopefully a fresh perspective. Again, it is necessary to address the subject because when one considers the thousands of churches that dot our religious landscape, then one can only conclude transition in church leadership is an everyday occurrence, a phenomenon with the potential to impact bodies, and the very communities they seek to serve, whether they be local, national, or global.

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[1] See Bibliography for listing.

What guidelines do these churches have to steer safely through a transition in leadership from generation to generation? And if they are unable to make up their own, where will that leave them?

Early on, the writer noted that leadership models are everywhere. One only need look next door, or on television, or perhaps to city hall. This country readily embraces and accepts leaders in sports. Coaches at all levels, even those who are incapable of teaching, are adored on a strange level, especially if they are winning. But does this make them leaders? Just a few weeks prior to the end of this project, an in-depth report showed that high school coaches in Texas, even in the smallest towns, were grossly overpaid, while some science, math and English teachers are left to struggle on annual salaries far below the national level. Coaches are leaders, in their context—that is, they lead and make decisions for their teams. They teach sports, teamwork and expound ever-daily on the concept of practice. Other models in leadership are present for use as examples. In families, someone is looked up to for leadership, for guidance, for necessities and for crucial decisions. In government, the country expects the president to outline his agenda in the state of the union address. If (S)he can not do this, (S)he is not fit to lead. This is merely a promise of what (S)he plans to try and do. Friedman says it this way,

> People choose leaders because they promise to lead them to a happier or more fruitful state, but after the election, the followers invariably function, either individually or in concert, to frustrate their leaders' efforts. This is as true with Congress as with the Presidium; in Parliament as in any church or synagogue.[1]

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[1] Friedman, p. 224.

On the local level, taxpayers hold their various city mothers and fathers to campaign promises and vote them out if they fail to lead in the manner in which they should. All these people have numerous sources to tap into, as a way of understanding the context they now find themselves in. President Clinton, critics have argued, compares himself a little too much with another president—John F. Kennedy. But one could argue with the critics and political analysts that Clinton saw Kennedy as a very good *model* in leadership to study, to emulate and which to learn. Clinton, in this age of camera-happy media, has not made the rumored mistakes that JKF is said to have, away from the camera's eye. With government and its leaders, international and national, there is plenty of documentation and countless political models of leadership to study and to learn. Within the context of family leadership, one may not have to travel to the library or Internet to realize his or her leadership dream. Usually, people who want or choose to lead their families do so, by drawing on the examples left as a legacy to them. They remember how grandmother used to do it, or how successful father was in his leadership capabilities. Very early, little girls begin to play with dolls as a way to work on their leadership skills, or their natural ability and attraction, and even affection for being a mother. Again, this writer will state, there are leadership models everywhere you look, and enough literature to rival that of the New York Public Library System. The exception continues to be the model currently under discussion-- Transition in Church Leadership: From Generation to Generation. Where are the written examples for future leaders to follow, to study, to understand? Why has this subject been so ignored, or overlooked? What can be done to change the state of art in this area? Let us attempt to answer these questions, as the writer asks that one keep in mind, his answers are certainly opinion on the one hand, and

personal truth on the other. What has happened to the writer in his personal transition is truth, the absolute truth of his situation. The things that another can do to put this model to work, or copy certain solutions of it, are merely opinion, the writer's solid opinion and belief that they are indeed helpful. For the writer, literature on the subject of leadership was helpful to the point that it stimulated and ignited a fire that found its way to another source, a greater source. Someone once said, where there is no road, go there and leave a path. This writer can finally relate to that. But fortunately, for the writer, that greater source of information and knowledge was the only available one that truly contained a comprehensive look at not one, but many models of transition in church leadership, and yes, even from generation to generation. That source is—the bible. Before we analyze and summarize and theorize on why these transitions were either successful or not, let us pause here to give a critical review of some of the literature this writer came to know. The following efforts show the state of the art this particular ministry model is in to date.

As earlier stated, leadership is a unique and peculiar phenomenon. Some, like Hans Finzel, define leadership as influence.[2] Finzel goes further and assets, " Anyone who influences someone else to do something has led that person." [3] Others, like Weems, define leadership "a gift from God, confirmed by the church, for the service of others and the upbuilding of the body of Christ."[4] Miles Monroe, on the other hand, puts forth the following definition:

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[2] Finzel, p.16.

[3] Ibid., p.16.

[4] Lovett H. Weems, Jr., *Church Leadership: Vision, Team, Culture, and Integrity*, with a Foreword by Rosabeth Moss Kanter, (Nashville: Abingdon, 1993), p.17

> A simple and general definition of leadership includes the capacity to influence, inspire, rally, direct, encourage, motivate, induce, move, mobilize, and activate others to pursue a common goal or purpose while maintaining commitment, momentum, confidence, and courage. Leadership is the organizing and coordinating of resources, energies and relationships in a productive context for an intended result. In its simplest form, leadership is the managing of managers toward a common goal. Therefore, leadership by its very nature incorporates a clear purpose and vision which provide the fuel for inspiration, motivation and mobilization.[5]

As we can see, there are a garden variety of definitions and ideas about leadership. Many intellectuals, including the renowned Cornel West, of Harvard University, give us a possibility for the vacuum in leadership. West persuasively argues that leadership "requires personal integrity and political savvy, moral vision and prudential judgment and organizational patience."[6] The one thing that can be concluded is there is an absence of strong leadership, not only in society, but in the church. Unfortunately for African-Americans, the subject becomes even more complex because of a domino effect in the black community that has stripped many of a support system that once started and ended with the church. The major challenge in the black community today is the need to generate new leadership. A future for black people, therefore, must be grounded in the best of the past, but at the same time, one that is deeply in tune with the conundrums that currently plague people of African descent.

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[5] Myles Munroe, *Becoming a Leader*, (Bakersfield, CA: Pneuma Life Publishing, 1993), pp. 30-31.

[6] Cornel West, *Race Matters*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993), p. 40.

Other literature on the subject of leadership in general also intrigued the writer during the research process, but failed to address transition in church leadership, and/or shed much light on what a person could or should do to survive. An interesting article by Warren Bennis outlined the criticisms pertaining to the amount of time spent on the promotion of effective leadership skills at bible colleges and schools.[7] Bennis also asserts that bible knowledge and understanding should come first, but what good is it to the future leader who can not communicate with the people, or demonstrate the necessary business skills?[8] Jesus did not have a budget or building in the time of His ministry.[9] But the reality of life today is, church leaders must lead on several different fronts. Some of these skills can be learned. Men and women can be trained through effective study, discussion and practice. Further, the author likes what he read from Michael D. Cohen and James G. March, who contend that observers and practitioners underestimate the complexity of the leadership processes and overestimate the significance of individual leaders.[10] If more people felt like Cohen and March, perhaps there would be more available now on the subject of transition in church leadership. For this writer has stressed many times, the process and the leaders certainly can overshadow the transition itself, which is much more important, and affects many more people than just the leader and his/her immediate family. If more on leadership situations, especially transitions from one generation to another is understood and appreciated, this writer believes a lot of churches would not be in the state of disarray they are in today. Let us offer one other opinion on the matter. Max DePree offers some

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[7] Warren Bennis, *On Becoming A Leader*, (Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley, 1989).
[8] Ibid.
[9] This was a statement made by Dexter Wise during some casual conversion.
[10] Michael D. Cohen and James G. March, *Leadership and Ambiguity*, 2nd ed., (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1986), p. xiv.

philosophical insight on the subject. Just as his title *Leadership Is An Art* suggests, he believes that leadership is much more an art, than a science.[11] He calls it a belief or condition of the heart.[12] For this reason, the writer is now in a unique position to firmly state that matters of the heart need to be shared so that others might benefit. A transition is a very personal thing, filled with many indescribable emotions. Many times, this writer found himself moved to tears, frustrated, disconnected, loved, hated, believed and feared, all at the same time, and all at different intervals—before, during and after his personal transition. More must be said, done and written to address the void on this model of ministry. The state of art to date seems to be in disarray. No more positive, concrete proof exists than in one book the writer was able to find on the subject of transitional leadership from generation to generation. That book, "*Too Great A Temptation*",[13] supplies us with a modern-day look at one man's personal struggle to take the leadership mantle denied him. Unfortunately, the book does not get into specific solutions on how to avoid the primary and secondary pitfalls that face men and women in similar situations. Nevertheless, Dr. Joel Gregory's book made a profound impact on the writer, as a start in the right direction to address the concerns of transitional leadership. Let us pause here and look at what happened to Joel Gregory.

In his book, Gregory defines the structure and seductive nature of America's super church and the climb that took him from a small Texas town to Dallas' largest and America's most powerful pulpit. To put the same thing another way, Gregory says:

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[11] Max DePree, *Leadership Is An Art*, (New York: Doubleday, 1989), p. 36.
[12] Ibid.

> For a non Baptist, the seductive appeal of First Baptist, Dallas, might rest beyond rational comprehension. For a Baptist preacher, however, its allure exceeds facile description. What Rome is to the Catholic, Salt Lake City to the Mormon, or Canterbury to the Anglican, so is FBC Dallas to Baptist. But that does not express it. There is also the appeal that Maxim's has to the gourmet, the Burgundy, region of France to the connoisseur of wine, with a dash of the attraction of Las Vegas has for the gambler. Since preachers are supposed to be spiritual, they are not supposed to lust for a position. Yet, for generations of Baptist preachers, the magnetism of FBC Dallas evokes something in the spiritual realm akin to sexual lust in the fleshly realm.
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> First, the physical setting of the church is Dallas, Big D, the capital of materialism in that corner of the western hemisphere. Dallas understands two things: money and power. You are valued according to how much you possess of one or both. If the gods of materialism blessed you with both, you are virtually worshipped. Lest you think this overblown, go live there for awhile.[14]

This book is perhaps the most detailed modern-day example of why things went wrong in what should have been a relatively easy transition in church leadership-from one generation to another. The background information sounds simple enough: a preaching pioneer, Dr. W. A. Criswell, with countless achievements and a long lists of firsts, is set to step down after fifty productive years. His hand-picked successor is poised to take over, and make his own mark, with a style he feels has been blessed by God. The two are able to forge a spiritual father-son relationship, akin to mentor-mentee. Promises are made, and the mantle is ready to be passed. Then, according to Gregory, the unthinkable happens—

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[13] Joel Gregory, *Too Great A Temptation: The Seductive Power of America's Super Church*, (Fort Worth: The Summit Group, 1994).

the mantle will be held on to *a little while longer.*[15] Second, Dr. Gregory is informed, in no uncertain terms, the mantle will be shared, indefinitely. Translated, this comes to mean that First Baptist, in Dallas, considered one body with its thousands of members, will have two heads until further notice. What happens here is that the transition is eaten up by the long, transitional process, which is extended and prolonged intentionally because of fear, anger and suspicion. There is always fear of the unknown, and fear of change.[16] In this sordid story exists a level of suspicion that allowed hundreds to participate in choosing sides in a transition that never was. After two years of waiting to inherit his coveted baton, Gregory chose to exit the process because of the damaging length it had taken and the destructive path it allowed the congregation to remain all that time.

Again, it is important to reiterate that Gregory's text, though interesting reading and good denominational gossip, along with high drama, it lacks insight on the process because there was never closure in this particular transition in leadership. The Criswell-Gregory proposed transition had the potential to be utilized as a modern-day model around the nation, but it failed miserably when it never materialized completely, nor successfully. Therefore, let us discuss what might be a logical point of departure for those interested in transition in church leadership. Let us begin by looking to the word of God. Here, we will find models in transition in church leadership that transcend time and space. One model in particular, that this author has found useful, not to emulate however, but to critique, is that of Saul and David.

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[14] Ibid., p. 37.
[15] Ibid., pp. 298-302.

Most bible students are quite familiar with the transition in leadership between Saul and David. Thousands, maybe millions, of preachers and teachers have examined this moment in Israel's history for as long as the Word of God has been made available. Some have used this story to talk about how Israel became a united kingdom. Others have utilized it to discuss the passing of one type of leadership to another type. Some have used it to explore the nature and character of God, while others have used this drama to reflect on strength and faith of Israel's greatest earthly king. It is unquestionable that all of the aforementioned genres have their place, but it appears that they point to one central theme—the dynamics of transition in leadership. Therefore, we shall explore the obvious and subtle issues surrounding this hurtful period in the life of Israel and its greatest king. Before we turn to the transition, let us pause here and give a succinct case history of Israel's leadership evolution.

Israel's Leadership Cycle

For hundreds of years, Israel had been ruled by the Patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob) and Prophets (Moses and Joshua), and then, Judges. These three (patriarchs, prophets and judges) represent the basic types of leadership Israel had before the advent of the monarchy. The era of judges came to an end in about 1025 B.C.E.[17] This transition is highlighted by the miraculous birth of Samuel and his tenure as priest. Samuel is the

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[16] William Easum, *Dancing With Dinosaurs: Ministry In A Hostile & Hurting World*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993), pp. 11-15.

central transitional leader in "Israel who oversees the political move by the tribes of Israel from governance by judges to rule by kings.[18]

Following God's mandate, Samuel anoints Saul of Geba, Israel's first monarch. His tenure is relatively ambiguous,[19] as is his influence in that region. It is universally believed among some scholars, like Bruggerman [20]that his influence reached no further than a few northern territories (e.g. Benjamin, Ephraim and Gilead). Though he did enjoy some presence in at least two southern areas, namely Galilee and Judah. Saul's kingship was turbulent from day one. During his reign, Israel constantly fought hostile tribes (Gibeonites), and there was internal dissension, and undying hate for his successor. This point will be an adequate place for us to stop and anchor our subsequent reflections on the transition between Saul and David. In this section, we will attempt to answer the following questions: What led to the transition? Who were the key players? What were their reactions to the transition? Who caused the process to break down? How did the people influence or impact this process? Could the other leaders help to abate, if not eliminate the tension? What was God's role? What can the twenty-first century church learn from this tragic transition? Was it really tragic? In other words, was it tragedy or triumph? What are the theological, psychological and sociological components in this story? Could it have worked under a

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[17] Frank Johnson, *Basic Bible Commentary: First and Second Samuel,* Vol. 5.,(Nashville; Abingdon Press, 1988), p.8.

[18] Ibid. p.8.

[19] 1 S.. 13:1.

[20] Walter Brueggeman, *Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*, Vol. 3108-7, *First and Second Samuel,* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1990), pp. 82-83.

different set of circumstances? What could have aided or facilitated a smoother transition between these two leaders?

A Critique Of Transition In Church Leadership:

From David To Saul

King David is one of the most popular figures in the entire bible. His name stands as tall as the Egyptian pyramids. In fact, David "is mentioned more than one thousand times in the bible—three times as often as Abraham, and more times than Moses."[21] Movie makers have exploited him, artists have painted him, and God-fearing parents have named their children after him. As a matter of fact, one of this writer's best friends is named David. Who does not remember his great act of courage—as a young shepherd boy, David, defeated in grand fashion, the heavyweight champion of the Philistine army—Goliath! Every step of David's journey from his post as shepherd to his battle against Goliath to his days as harp player for Saul was guided by God. For soon after he spent days and nights soothing the king's head with his beautiful music, David was given a promotion. But the promotion Saul gave to David, to "set over the men of war",[22] was merely a smoke screen to hide something buried deep in Saul's heart—his ever-growing jealousy of David. Saul was able to throw everyone off his scent, including his beloved son, Jonathan, who loved

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[21] Gene A. Getz, *Men of Character*, Vol. 1, *David: Seeking God Faithfully*. With a Foreword by Paul Meier. (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1995), p. ix.

[22] 1 S.. 18:5.

and admired David greatly, and even had his soul "knit to the soul of David".[23] And so it seems with some popular people, everyone likes them and wants to be around them. Even Saul's servants were not jealous of David. And more than anyone, it would stand to reason, they would have a gripe with David. After all, it was not that long ago, he too was a servant. But David had in him the presence of God, and all those who came close to him, knew it, and felt it. In short, David was love—and he was well loved. Saul saw it, and plotted, first with the phony promotion, and second with a demotion.

From the very beginning, when David's military abilities caused the people to cheer him more than Saul, it caused the first nick on Saul's heart. From a little nick that devastated Saul's ego, a ripple would follow, finally tearing Saul's jealous heart in two. Saul never recovered from all the revelry and joy lavished upon David for killing his 'tens of thousands'....while Saul was only lauded for killing thousands. [24] That planted the seed of jealousy and doubt in Saul's mind and he sought, from that day forward, to hurt David. How prophetic the words from Saul's own mouth when he sarcastically asked, "Now what more can he have but the kingdom?"[25] This lone statement speaks volumes about the reason the transition in leadership was rocky, problematic and even dangerous, for the successor. It is what happens when the popularity of the incoming leadership, supersedes that of the outgoing person, even if it is unintentional. And David's popularity well overshadowed Saul's after his heroic victory over Goliath. What could Saul do to possibly compete with that? Absolutely nothing. God's plan was for David to meet and slay the

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[23] 1 S. 18:1.
[24] 1 S. 18:6-7.
[25] 1 S. 18:8.

Philistine. Once that happened, this author might argue, Saul realized the mood for the transition was forever set. David was destiny, and Saul was not the same man, who when he took over as king, heard the masses chant, "long live the king." Instead of graciousness and maturity, Saul resorted to the worst kind of jealousy there is—the kind consumed by three dangerous emotions: anger, fear and suspicion. It is imperative that these dynamics be discussed at this point in time, because of the role they play in the transitional process itself. In order to thoroughly understand these three compelling emotions and why they eventually led to Saul's complete and total downfall, one must break down each emotion and show how they worked together as the driving force that caused Saul's spiritual and physical death.

First, let us look at anger. Why was Saul angry over David's success? Anger is a difficult emotion to master because it is a natural and human emotion. Saul allowed his anger to control him, instead of controlling it. This uncontrollable emotion, not only affected him psychologically, but it also affected his ability to lead, and ultimately caused grief, misery and pain for persons around him, especially David. During (Transition In Church Leadership) TICL in the nineties, the absence of strength of character and the mental maturity to pass the mantle at the anointed and appointed time, can still prove the same disastrous results as did with Saul and David. If the outgoing leadership loses control of his/her emotions, and one of the sub-emotions or dynamics is anger, he/she will, like Saul, resort to things unbecoming to a leader, including, and not limited to, sabotage, back stabbing, corruption and conspiracy with intent to prompt failure on the part of the incoming leadership. Just as Saul had unknown accomplices and accessories to his

demonic scheme against his successor, so it is today with easily-influenced members of a body caught between the rock and hard place known as transition. Many are drawn into a bloodless battle they are ill-prepared to take up. One final point: anger breeds anger. Here again, is why it is so important that those engaged in the process watch their emotions. Saul's anger could have easily led to David's counter-anger or wrath-in-return, and a blood bath—with Saul's army doing much of the bleeding. Another possibility, had David lashed out at Saul to return his unwarranted anger: the jeopardy placed on the pending leadership of Israel.

Fear is the second of the three emotional monsters. Webster defines fear as *a feeling of anxiety and agitation caused by the presence or nearness of danger, pain, apprehension, dread, terror or fright.* These are the very things that motivated Saul to behave the way he did toward David after their triumphant return from the battle against the Philistine. When the women sang and danced and paid tribute to David, saying he had killed his *ten thousands,* while they applauded King Saul for defeating his *thousands*, this made Saul anxious about the future and jealous about the present. Because of Saul's fear, his past, present and future merged into an everlasting now. And his now was threatened by the presence, power and persona of David. Saul felt, in some way, that his whole world was at stake. He feared change was inevitable. Saul was right. Change was on the horizon. In transition in leadership, fear about the future, will almost always foster anxiety. And this kind of anxiousness in the leader will, in certain instances, create even more anxiety and uncertainty in the followers. Most conscientious constituents will have concerns about the future, and their respective roles and how change will affect those beloved roles.

Therefore, it is incumbent upon the leader of the group, to help abate these fears, if not eliminate them by facing these fears courageously , and with a sense of responsibility. At the height of economic turmoil in this country, its leader at the time, Franklin D. Roosevelt, once sagaciously suggested that there was nothing to fear but fear itself. In spiritual jargon, no one knows what the future holds, but we do know *who* holds the future. As a matter of fact, in the King James version of the bible, there are exactly 365 *fear nots.* Incidentally, there are 365 days in the year, which means, God has given the chosen a 'fear not' for every day of the week. God does not want anyone to live a single day in fear. Saul could have learned from this, but instead of Saul's realization of his own important and prominent place in biblical history, he focused more on how he thought David would succeed him in greatness. Saul was, in fact, a great warrior, statesman, king and survivor who commanded respect, not only with his physical stature, but also with his spiritual gifts and graces. But how quickly fear in Saul's heart caused him to forget his many virtues and victories and mighty accomplishments. As often is the case during TICL, predecessors should not focus on their failures as they exit or end their tenure, but rather, thank God and others for what they were used to establish and accomplish. The point is, transition is not to be viewed as a juvenile competition, simply between the old and the new, but as a part of the sovereign will and purpose of God. Joel Gregory calls this *a matter of providence.*[26] And Saul should have known, and others must know, that nothing and no one can do damage to the Herculean achievements of one leader or generation by another. In the larger scheme of things, David could not put a dent in the armor of Saul. He never intended to. Fear, however, further distorted and diminished Saul's already

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[26] Gregory, p.297.

faltering spiritual sensibilities. It is trite to say that Saul had done many good things (e.g. had become first king of Israel, established first real military, etc.). But, like

many such figures, there was another side. When leaders like Saul become virtual apotheosis, and icons, standing above confrontation, it can do strange things to one psychologically.[27] It can cause *fear*. But the thing that forever fed Saul's fear was his suspicion. Let us look now at the third dangerous emotion that was Israel's king's constant companion.

Saul suspected everyone. He had no concrete suspects and no concrete evidence, so this made everyone suspect. His family was no exception. Because of Saul's paranoia that he would be overthrown for a new king, he sought to use his own family as protection from the inevitable. Saul's suspicious mind never rested. He had his suspicions about Samuel and his secretive mission to Bethlehem. Saul was highly suspicious about his son, Jonathan. Though he wanted to believe in Jonathan's love for him, he could not help but be bothered that his own flesh and blood continued to question his actions and motives toward David. Jonathan would often demand to know what David had done to anger his father so, or even be the target of such unprovoked suspicion. Sadder than any of these, was the fact that Saul was suspicious of his own followers. He mistakenly believed that the masses were somehow involved in a clandestine, national plot to overthrown his kingdom. This kind of seven-day-a-week paranoia was hard for Saul to shake, and therefore weakened any real leadership qualities he may have still possessed toward the end of his

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[27] Ibid. p. xv.

tenure. Saul seemed to be suffering from the 'why me' syndrome. In other words, he erroneously suspected that no one else had gone through what he was going through. This suspicion, or belief, evoked self-sympathy. Saul never again looked at friends, advisors and relatives in the same way. Because it is recorded that Saul experienced many mood swings,[28] it is probably safe to deduce suspicion fueled this irrational behavior even more. To find out which of his suspicions were true, or had any possible substance to them, Saul would create and devise little tests he put people through. If one passed, this helped to change what Saul may have suspected that person of initially. For example, when Saul himself tried twice to kill David with a spear[29], as he played his harp for him, David never retaliated. He simply was guided to move out of the way both times. As much as Saul suspected David of being the next generation on the throne, he also was still smart enough to suspect, and respect, that David was being protected by the very God he once served. The fact that Saul knew and understood this power greater than his own, is indeed indicative of all the emotions we have talked about merging, or coming together. Saul's jealousy could not kill David. Neither could his spear. This led to his anger, which produced anxiety. Add the deadly emotion we are now discussing, suspicion, and it is easy to see how fear sealed Saul's fate. Saul loved David. Then he hated him. Saul's jealousy of David confirmed the transitional wheels were in motion, and set so by the people, who propelled David to untold popularity. In doing so, they also set Saul's anger into motion. See Chapter V, *The Results of the Model,* for further details. This emotion soon became uncontrollable, and called on a close cousin to counsel it—suspicion. Saul ended up thinking everyone was out to get him, not realizing that he was still very much loved and

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[28] I S. 18:9; 19:9; 20:30.

revered, with his place in history protected forever. Finally, when he could not kill David, his soon-to-be successor, with his own hands, Saul instinctively knew God had his hand on David. That brought fear into the very beat of Saul's own heart. Imagine, if you will, a man that had once walked with God, knowing he was now walking away from God, unprotected and unable to conquer this new generation of power and purpose. When these three emotions—anger, suspicion and fear, are played together like instruments, the resulting symphony of jealousy is deafening. No wonder poor Saul could not hear anyone reaching out to help him. No wonder Saul fell so hard. He could no longer hear God. Even in fear, God has advised the faithful to *be still and know that I am.*[30] Was there ever a time during all of this transitional commotion that Saul was ever mentally and/or spiritually still? Unfortunately, Saul was caught in his own suspicious trap. And like the wounded animal who twists and turns and struggles to get out, he never sits still, just still, to see if someone will help him. He never turns his face to see if God will help him. How can we relate this same type of behavior and response to the modern transitional process? And further, how can leaders avoid the aforementioned responses that led Saul to behave the way he did?

First, let us go back to what attracted God to David. He was, and remained a man 'after God's own heart'. Faith in God's plan and strength of character are two things this author continues to stress. One reason is, the business of leadership is not for the weak, the timid, or the faint-hearted. It is also not for those men and women who only have faith when it is convenient, but are able to quickly abandon it when things get tough. A (wo) man after

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[29] I S. 18:11; 19:10.

God's own heart must have staying power. And he, or she, must be able to weather some storms[31] that thicken the hide, and at the same time, make it as smooth and soft as the baby skin. Leadership takes that kind of patience. To be after God's own heart literally means to seek his face, to study God's word, and to do God's will. God knew David was this kind of man and God also knew, at the exact moment, when Saul ceased to be. Even with Saul's height and might, he was erased from Israel as a small-minded man who damaged his own dynasty and any lasting legacy that was once his. In other words, Saul himself, in the quest to maim, and/or destroy David, tainted his own kingship, and the mere memory of it, by his unsavory deeds. In TICL, the same is done today when one generation initially, like Saul, can embrace the new generation of leadership. But at the very thought or *suspicion* that their leadership will be overshadowed, or soon forgotten, can become jealous and vindictive. In many ways, the destruction that characterized Saul's regime in the end, is true of many leaders who feel their popularity or place in history may be in jeopardy. Their response, in some cases, is to resort to chaos, confusion and conspiracy. Instead of respectfully and rightfully passing the mantle, some hang on, simply to split, or divide the ranks.[32] Is it not surprising then, that chaos makes itself right at home? Not far behind chaos, is confusion over who is actually the leader. The third "c" is perhaps the worst. A conspiracy takes much more effort on the part of the outgoing leadership because this involves an actual smear campaign to oust the incoming leadership before it is even firmly in place! To conspire against, is a very serious accusation and involves more than one party. Furthermore, a person who would sabotage another leader's

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[30] Ps. 46:10.
[31] Dale, p. 177.
[32] Ibid. pp. 182-184.

chances for a successful transition is no longer acting on suspicion alone.[33] His or her jealousy now includes fear, perhaps the fear of being forgotten, and the fear of rejection. Somehow, leaders who have come to the exit point, have not learned to properly deal with the fact that a body accepts a new head, is not suddenly rejecting the old one. But they are in fact, resting the former and restoring it to a most deserved place in the story or that entity or organization. For those whose fear turn to anger, they may find themselves as out of control as Saul was during a transition in leadership. Let us first, be honest. For many, there is great pain at the thought of being replaced, or 'put out to pasture'. This is the wrong attitude to even entertain. Sometimes the energy and vitality of a new and young leader is misconstrued by the old, as a brash, insensitive slap in the face that wreaks of cruelty. If perception is reality for some, and this is how some leaders feel, can anything be done by the incoming leadership to somehow soothe the tired and fragile egos that have lashed out in anger at times? Who should reach out to whom? It goes back to the men and women who are truly after God's own heart. They will not have to be told to treat their mentors and elders with respect. They will not have to be reminded to exercise grace and good manners. They will not have to be chastised for provoking and/or mocking a perhaps outdated mode of leadership, that once did very great things. Transition means change, and indicates a shift, or move to reach that change.[34] Sometimes more progress is made to that end, with a gentle push, than a violent pull. As leaders examine themselves, they should seek to find if they are more like David, or more like Saul in the transitional

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[33] Edwin H. Friedman, *Generation to Generation: Family Process in Church and Synagogue*, p. 230. In this section, the dynamics of sabotage are articulated in clear and coherent terms. It also discusses ways that one can avoid being triangled into this process.

[34] William Bridges, *Transitions: Making Sense of Life's Changes*, (New York: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, Inc., 1980), pp. 2-5.

process. On the one hand, David did everything he could to avoid Saul's jealousy and the evil emotions that followed. David crossed the street, and all of Israel for that matter, to stay out of Saul's way. Keep in mind, he did not have to do that. David was protected by God, yet he responded to Saul's naked aggression by hiding himself. David twice ducked Saul's spear. Yet, he did not yank the spear out of Saul's hand and destroy him with his own weapon. David waited on God, first out of respect for King Saul, and second, out of duty to God, a self-imposed duty that allowed him to want to please God. David really was a man after God's own heart. David also followed the transitional plan laid out for his anointing. He even did things that he probably knew were traps, laid by Saul. David married one of Saul's daughters, in yet another effort by Saul to keep David close, and yet send him far enough away to be killed. David did not allow himself the luxury of being troubled by Saul's' efforts to turn his friends and followers against him. For this reason, he had no need to stoop to Saul's level. How many leaders in transitional situations can say they removed any potential negative by their refusal to engage in trickery, deception and disrespect? How many generational leaders poised to take over can avoid being sucked into a war of words over whose methods are right or wrong? Too many leaders make a conscious choice to act like Saul, and attempt to crush any notion of a smooth and successful transition. Sadly, and incorrectly, they believe that if the transition is stained, or goes through a rough initiation period, that the incoming leader is somehow stained, or damaged. Greedy swine who roll around in the mud somehow only get dirtier themselves. You never hear people complain about those who watch such a spectacle. It is the small minds that participate in such strategies who end up doing more damage to their own reputation and credentials than the people determined to take the higher, drier, less-muddy

ground. Age does not equal maturity. One would hope that devastating emotions like anger, suspicion and fear could be kept in check, after one generation has promised to support another during a TICL. The current crop of leaders must do more to provide future leaders with examples of what their transitions could be like. Generations must be able to survive the transition test, and pass with flying colors. Those colors include: honor, self-respect, mutual understanding, faith and most importantly, strength of character. When these things are demonstrated in a timely and proper manner, new generations of leadership are inspired, instead of stifled during the transition. These colors of personal traits provide a glimpse into what the future can hold for its new generation of leaders. During the transitional process, young must witness old and their affirmation of both past, present and future, and the faith they are supposed to have in the next logical step—God's great reward for a job well done. Still to come in Chapter III, we will discuss a successful model of transition in leadership, and show how one leader was actually able to receive his reward with graciousness, love and pride in his solid list of achievements.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

Beginning in II Kings 2, we find the story that deals with the transition that took place in the spiritual leadership of Israel with the translation of Elijah into heaven. Elisha's miracles here have to do mostly with his acceptance of the mantle as Elijah's spiritual and/or prophetic successor. Before we discuss the transition between these two great prophets of God, let us pause here and paint a brief biographical picture of Elijah.

Elijah was appointed by God to fight idolatry in Israel. Without a lot of biblical details, or theological fanfare, Elijah abruptly appears on the historical scene. He is simply identified as "Elijah the Tishbite from Tishbe in Gilead"[1] It is also worth noting that Elijah, like Jesus, and many other biblical giants, was born in obscurity. We know, in fact, little about his lineage, and we can only speculate, regarding his early prophetic ministry. As a matter of fact, Old Testament scholars have been unable to pinpoint his place or time of birth. Furthermore, archeologists have had no success in locating the biblical city Tishbe, Elijah's hometown. No one knows when he was born, or, taken up into glory. In a word, his beginning, and ending are characterized by mystery and intrigue. The success of this great prophet's life, and ministry, however, were never overshadowed by the circumstances surrounding his biological makeup and history. Instead, the mystery of the unknown served to act as a complement, or embellishment to his stellar performance as a servant of God. Most theologians agree it was not so important where Elijah came from, but where he was sent by God, as well as his ability to get there by faith. Perhaps,

[1] 1K. 17:1.

this is why Elijah is so prominent in the New Testament. He, along with Moses, appeared on the mount of transfiguration, with Jesus.[1] Unquestionably, this was one of the greatest events recorded in the entire bible. To be associated with Moses, and Jesus, demonstrates, unequivocally, Elijah's prominence in biblical history. Getz writes, " 'we have all heard of guilt by association'. In Elijah's case, it was *greatness by association*".[2]

Since historians and theologians do not dwell on the missing background information that would have shed more light on Elijah's origins, there usually exists a tendency to focus more on the many similarities between Elijah and Moses. Let us preface that statement with the following. Sometimes, FBI agents are missing key information about possible suspects, or people for whom they are looking.. In the absence of details that would reveal more, they call in a psychological specialist to do a 'profile'. This data or biographical sketch can narrow the list of potential candidates down from millions, to thousands, and then, to hundreds, and that gives agents a better chance of becoming familiar with what kind of man or woman they are looking for, even if they do not know who they are looking for, or where he or she is from. What one, even if he or she is not an FBI agent, can deduce from information about the similarities between Moses and Elijah is, Elijah must have been anointed by God, and prepared for his role as prophet, long before he just appeared on the scene. Why? Both played diplomatic roles in the spiritual direction of their beloved country, Israel. God used both prophets to speak to the people with signs, including miracles and other amazing demonstrations. And finally, both Moses and Elijah were able to communicate with God in extraordinary ways. Like Moses, one can speculate that Elijah was

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[1] Lu 9:31; Mt. 17:3.

[2] Gene A. Getz, *Men of Character*, Vol. 2. *Fast.* With a Foreword by Stephen A Olford. (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1995), p. 5.

prepared for his role, long before he suddenly shows up in Ahab's court. And even then, there was a presence, an aura about his striking confidence: "As the Lord, the God of Israel, lives, whom I serve, there will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at my word."[3] These things all seem to lend themselves to a possible theory that perhaps Elijah also led a similar life, to that of his forefather, Moses. Perhaps, he too, had a destiny from the moment he was born, whenever and wherever that was. C.F. Keil had lavish praise for Elijah when he wrote: "No other prophet, either before or after, strove and worked in the idolatrous kingdom for the honor of the Lord of Sabbath with anything like the same mighty power of God as the mighty prophet Elijah."[4] Consider this: historically speaking, both prophets would confront willful and stubborn kings (Pharaoh and Ahab) who refused to obey God, and both, by doing so would place their own lives in danger. Elijah was fully aware that his, was a mission for God, and he was also aware of the danger it would entail, and the thousands of miles it would encompass each direction. At one point, when Ahab was searching for Elijah, he was everywhere, and yet he was nowhere. Elijah would be among the people, performing tasks that God called him to do. In his many travels, while Israel awaited the rains, Elijah realized that he had something to offer and that it would only be given as a father would reward a son, a son who had not yet been revealed to him. Elijah was often lonely on his mission for God. He was a hunted man. On those occasions when he was forced to stay out of sight from Ahab and his henchmen, God always sent him some form of comfort, whether it was in the birds who carried food and messages, or in the widow woman whose son died. God never placed a person or thing in Elijah's life without purpose.

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[3] 1K. 17:1.

[4] Getz, *Men of Character*, Vol. 2,p.5

Consider the case of Obadiah, a servant of the wicked king, who came to be a vigorous ally for Elijah, but after Elijah had traveled all over the countryside and beyond, it was not until he came upon a small farming village in the Jordan Valley, far north and east of Mount Horeb, that he spotted Elisha. And just as he suddenly and mysteriously shows up at Ahab's, he is now right in front of his future assistant. But, unlike the confused and wicked leader, Elisha was very clear and faithful, for he knew something new in the moment would lead him from the plow and field for the rest of his life. According to the scripture, Elijah immediately went and placed his cloak around Elisha. Generally, this is symbolic of the anointed, or called. Elisha, from that day forward, followed and aided Elijah. Without hesitation, Elisha bade his biological family goodbye and took up with his new spiritual family, and father from which he would inherit the mantle of leadership. As we dissect this successful transition in leadership, we will attempt to answer some of the same questions connected to the earlier model, the unsuccessful model of Saul and David. Among those: What led to the transition? Who were the key players? What reaction did the people have to the transition? And did their actions and *reactions* help to shape or influence the transition? What was God's role in the transition? What can the twenty first century church learn from this successful transition? And what are the theological, psychological and sociological components in this story?

From Elijah to Elisha: A Healthy Transition

God has always provided protection for his faithful servants. Just as he led David through a maze of confusion set up by Saul, he surrounded Elijah with the kind of armor that shielded him from Ahab's anger and wrath. Jealousy was a key factor in Ahab's motivation to have Elijah captured--

dead or alive! He did not know that a declaration of war on Elijah, a man of God, was a direct and foolish declaration of war against God. Ahab's insecurity and obsession with the destruction of Elijah and his power, only served to aid Elijah's confidence in God. Consider how, even in his desperate loneliness, Elijah unflinchingly followed God's plan: Elijah's advice from God is to "Leave here, turn eastward and hide in the Kerith ravine, east of the Jordan."[5] All the tests and tribulations that Elijah endured in the thick of the brush and trees were purposely designed to build him up for the final test, which would be the passing of the mantle to God's next chosen generation, Elisha. And this is true even today. God will use special people for special projects or purposes, but before they can withstand the challenges and obstacles that will accompany such a mission, God must first prepare them to go on and see what the end will be. Leaders today could learn many lessons from Elijah and how he persevered, even when he suspected God had forgotten him. Keep in mind, Elijah was a man, a flesh and blood man who walked the earth just as men do today. He had many of the same fears and expressed them, either deep in his thoughts, or aloud to the birds who came to visit. Elijah even felt, at times, that he was not up to the task. He got tired, just as many in the struggle do today. But because he was tired, does not by any means, suggest that he ever completely gave up. Elijah never stopped believing that The Almighty would deliver him, and he always hoped God would be pleased with all that he had been assigned to do. Before we move to the actual transition, let us look at yet another example of Elijah's wondrous faith in God, and how God showed up at the exact moment when Elijah was fading.

While Elijah lived in the secluded ravine, safe from all harm and danger awaiting him from Ahab and others, he came to a point where his water supply, a brook, was about to dry up. And even

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[5] 1K. 17:3.

though God's ravens delivered meat and bread in a timely matter, Elijah worried about not having water for his needs.[6] Then, as the brook dried up, Elijah received his next set of instructions from God. In vv.8 and 9, we read that "the word of the Lord" came to Elijah, and ordered him to leave Kerith at once. Further, God had already found a way to supply Elijah's needs with food and shelter at the home of a widow. Elijah's faith led him to leave instantly. How many leaders who claim to be prophets today can demonstrate their faith in God by sticking to the plan, the vision, the dream? As stated earlier, God never places a person in the lives of his(her) servants, without a very good reason. And God knew Elijah had been lonely, and yet God also knew the widow was even lonelier, because she was weak spiritually, and physically, and had been praying constantly for the Lord to send her some help, not only for her, but also for her dying son. Elijah brings her comfort, almost immediately with his words, "Do not be afraid."[7] Though the widow did not completely understand, she did as she was told when Elijah requested that she make food, first for him, and then for herself and her son. Elijah assured her, "The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the Lord gives rain on the land."[8] Sure enough, they all had food every day. This bolstered Elijah's already great faith in God, even more. It, like the other tests that lay ahead, proved that prayers do get answered, when they are earnestly, and constantly prayed. The widow, like many others, and for more reasons than the jar, came to know Elijah truly was a man of God.[9]

After Elijah's time with the widow and her young son had come to an exhausting end, his journey and preparation to reach the end, began again. He had spent more than two fulfilling years in the

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[6] 1K. 17:7.
[7] 1K. 17:13.
[8] 1K. 17:13-14.

emotional security of the widow and her miracle child, whom Elijah had brought back from a deep, death sleep. During this time of happiness, Elijah found himself well-rested and rejuvenated. God recognized it was time for Elijah to return and face Ahab. It is written that God's special way of communication with his (her) prophet came again when Elijah was supplied these specific instructions: "Go and present yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the land."[10] Needless to say, Elijah left a very prepared man. He was now ready for his destiny, and to finish some *unfinished* business with the king. All these events, and others, preceding the actual transition, can be utilized to teach and train leaders, how and why they must stay on the course and run only where God has said to go with the mantle. When it is time to confront the enemy, men and women of God will instinctively know, because God's unique brand of communication has not changed that much. Yes, it is true that God does not speak directly to men, but (s)he does speak through others all around us, by using their words as directions, instructions and ideas. No doubt, this reader, as countless others can probably also attest, can remember some older person's wise words of caution in the moniker, *God is trying to tell you something*. God still works in mysterious ways, and those ways include getting the message out, even to those who turn a stubborn, deaf ear. God provided words for Elijah when the time came for him to confront Ahab on his own turf. When Ahab asked if it really were the troublemaker Elijah that stood before him, Elijah simply answered: "I have not made trouble for Israel." "But you and your father's family have. You have abandoned the Lord's commands and have followed the Baal."[11] Elijah's challenge, and subsequent victories over Ahab and Jezebel, set the stage for the masses to witness God's eternal power, and destruction of the wicked's faithless and faceless gods. All eyes were on

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[9] 1K. 17:24.
[10] 1K. 18:1.
[11] 1K. 18:18.

Elijah, and therefore on God. And as always, God won the battle, the war, and the doubters. Following this dramatic emotional high, Elijah found himself again drained and depressed. Elijah..."traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God."[12] It was here at Horeb that God again spoke to Elijah, inquiring what he was doing there. Elijah responds: "I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, broken down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too."[13] Elijah felt completely alone, even though he was not. God must have counseled Elijah with some much-needed spiritual nourishment, food that would prepare Elijah to step up to the transition very close at hand. Elijah's reward, his ascension into heaven, was right around the corner. But before he could receive his hard-earned reward, Elijah had to muster up the strength for that last mile of the journey to meet his successor--Elisha. One of the first things that God did to help Elijah prepare was to allow him rest, food, and the chance to put his insecure feelings into perspective. God assured Elijah he was not alone and that there were "seven thousand in Israel" who had not bowed down to the idolatrous god Baal. God further assured Elijah that he would never bear the burden of all of Israel alone. Other responsible and gifted servants would be there to help him, including Hazael, Jehu and *Elisha*.

Elijah's journey finally brought him to the Jordan Valley, where he went from Mount Horeb, "and found Elisha son of Shaphat."[14] Elisha was with eleven other men working in the field, for his father, a pretty well-off farmer. Elijah saw Elisha and immediately knew this was his destiny, his help, his attendant and the spiritual son who would indeed inherit the mantle. Elijah threw his

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[12] 1K. 19:8.
[13] 1K. 19:9-10.
[14] 1K. 19:19.

cloak on to the young body of Elisha, who was also very much aware that the future would bind them together, from that moment on. God has a way of healing all wounds, all hurts. God healed Elijah, first with food and encouragement, then with commitment and promise, and finally with a glimpse into the future. Elijah was not only re-dedicated to his mission in the word of God, he was also re-energized at the very prospect of having this younger, vital generation at his side, who would learn from him, grow to love and respect him, and eventually, inherit from him, all that God would allow. The great depression was over. The team of Elijah and Elisha worked together, prayed together, traveled together and ministered to the needs of people--together. This bond, between old and new, forced an unquestionable trust that allowed mutual respect. Elisha knew that he would never be the prophet that Elijah was, but this was not his aim, or desire. He also refused to let this stand in the way of the learning process. Like that sponge discussed earlier that soaks up knowledge from the watery wisdom around it, Elisha was excited about his future ministry and the goals he hoped God would let him achieve. Each leader, male or female, would like to make their particular mark on history, or be remembered for doing something that no one else has done. And if it has been done, great leaders seek to take that success to the next level, or a higher place. But how can this be done without disturbing the memory of those generations gone ahead? How can current or incoming leadership inherit their mantle without relaying the misperception that service is only a competition? How did Elisha do it? And how did his mentor feel at each passing day or every hour that came closer to his ending, and his protégé's beginning? When the time came for Elijah's great work to come to an end, the Lord decided to take him home "in a whirlwind".[15] Elijah's reward would prove just as dramatic as many of the events that have come to characterize his very life. And in the end, the final events that preceded the

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[15] 2 K. 2:1.

transition, may have bothered or confused Elisha. For on three different occasions, Elijah asked his young protégé to remain behind. Keep in mind, these are two men who had been everywhere together, and done everything *together.* Whatever his reasons, and we do not really know them, Elijah was determined to forge ahead and conduct his business, without Elisha. Why would Elijah want to be alone at this particular juncture, especially when one considers the pain endured by Elijah's great bouts of loneliness? We know that he very much enjoyed the company of his young friend, who was loyal to the end. Even when Elijah asked Elisha to stay behind, his response was that of a close and concerned friend, "I will not leave you". And he did not. On three different occasions, Elisha was instructed by Elijah to remain behind. Each time, his response was the same, "I will not leave you." According to the scripture, "the two of them walked on."[16] Since Elijah could not persuade or convince Elisha to stay behind, the two men left together on an assignment for God, from Gilgal to Bethel to Jericho, and on to the Jordan.

Was Elijah testing the strength and character of his young protégé, or his loyalty? As stated earlier, there was a time in Elijah's ministry when he felt ostracized by his peers and alienated by God.[17] But whatever the reason for both to take such a determined stance, senior prophet and prophet-to-be had their own agendas, mentally engraved in their respective hearts by God. Elijah, for example, probably knew, or suspected he was living his last day on earth. With this knowledge, perhaps he felt rest would only come at the end of such a glorious ministry if the task were finished--but only if it were completed. And maybe, even though he wanted Elisha to inherit the mantle, he also wanted to spare him the grief and sorrow that would come with it--his own death, and the end of his great ministry. Maybe Elijah knew his final mission would take place

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[16] 2 K. 2:6.

over The River Jordan, and he wanted to be alone, as he had been many times before. Possibly, his young mentee, following his own agenda, knew that he had to stay close to Elijah. If this was part of the test, Elisha was determined he would not fail. Like the tree that's by the water, Elisha was even stronger in his resolve that nothing and nobody would move him from his river, his source of strength, his all on earth--Elijah.[18] Again, there is no way to determine absolutely from the text what Elijah's and Elisha's motivation or rationale was. Therefore, the interpreter is left to speculate, or accept one of the aforementioned possibilities. What is certain is that Elisha follows Elijah to the very end.[19] In fact, Elisha takes an oath refusing to leave Elijah.[20] At one point in their walking and talking together, Elijah asked Elisha if there were anything he could do for him, before being taken away. Elisha's heart was full of love for his mentor, and he realized he could never be the great prophet Elijah was, so he asked for a double portion of Elijah's wisdom.[21] How did Elisha know the time to ask for this extra measure of wisdom? One might speculate Elisha had several hints or possible indicators. Look back at vv.2-3 where the prophets of the Lord living at Bethel flatly told Elisha that his spiritual father was leaving them. Elisha's response was: "Yea, I know it; hold your peace."[22] In other words, Elisha was telling them not to add to his sorrow by reminding him of that fact. Here, it is evident that Elisha deeply respected, loved and admired his mentor, Elijah. Obviously, a successful transition in leadership is more achievable when the protégé loves, respects and admires his predecessor.

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[17] 1K. 19:1ff.
[18] Ps 1.
[19] 2 K. 2:2, 4, 6.
[20] 2 K. 4:30; 1 S. 20:3; 25:26.
[21] 2 K. 2:9.
[22] 2 K. 2:2-3.

Even though there is great love, one for the other, as well as determination on the parts of both prophets and prophet-to-be to forge ahead with their own agendas and destinies, there is never a shortage of respect for the other, and for the impending transition that both seem to be aware of. Leaders today need to understand that successful transition can take place when the new and the old both have a clear plan for their roles in the future. Uncertainty, on either part, will almost inevitably lead to some unnecessary tension. This kind of tension was avoided by not only the incoming leadership, or new generation of leadership, doing all the humble things, all the right things, but also by sheer confidence that God was at the helm of this transition. Even in his defiance of Elijah, Elisha's refusal to remain behind was done gently and full of compassion and respect for the man he so honored as "My father, My father".[23] Perhaps another reason Elisha did not want to be separated from Elijah was that would mean a chance he would miss getting a very special blessing from God. One may theorize that Elisha is indeed the "chosen one", for it is he who has sacrificed all his possessions to travel with Elijah, learn from Elijah and ultimately, receive a double-portion of wisdom after Elijah is taken up into heaven.[24] Another indicator of this: note the fifty 'men of the sons of the prophets' who came to witness the passing of the mantle. They knew something magnificent was about to happen, yet they were not really sure exactly what. Of all the prophet understudies in Jericho and beyond, God chose Elisha for Elijah's mentee, none of the fifty or so others. They were merely hopeful observers....standing near the bank. Elijah rolled up his cloak, a symbol of God's power, and struck the water with it.[25] And like Moses had witnessed hundreds of years before him, the water split in half and the riverbed dried up so that Elijah and Elisha could cross over. God had parted the Red Sea for the Israelites. The

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[23] 2 K. 2:12.
[24] 2 K. 2:11.
[25] 2 K. 2:8.

two water-themed miracles, hundreds of years apart, was yet another comparison in the long list of similarities between Elijah and Moses. Both events proved the power of God and unmistakable affirmation that a transition in leadership had taken place. Here, a theological crescendo is building, because all are about to witness a divine miracle...a prophecy fulfilled. Just before his glorious departure, Elijah asks Elisha if there is anything he wants of him, before he is taken away forever. As stated before, Elisha boldly requests what many consider a birthright of the firstborn: a double portion. But what does he mean by double? Next, Elisha requested a double portion of Elijah's spirit.[26]

It should not be assumed, however, from the aforementioned statement that Elisha was asking to be twice as popular or perform twice as many miracles because he knew in his heart he could never be the prophet that Elijah was--on his own. He was really asking for help to carry on a tradition, a legacy left to him to take to the next phase. Elisha's request was for the spiritual strength to carry on the ministry of the man who was ascending now before him. He wanted what many of us today crave from our senior mentors--approval. It is not uncommon to hear of the mentee attempting to ease the mind of one soon to be departed. It, perhaps, was Elisha's way of sending his friend and father in the ministry home with the knowledge that he would do his best, with or without the blessing. Elijah makes it perfectly clear that his young charge has asked a very difficult thing indeed.[27] He then explains to Elisha, he would know if God allowed him to witness the ascension, that his prayer had been answered. God would bless him with a double portion of wisdom, of knowledge, and, of faith. This was not a prerequisite to receive the blessing, only the

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[26] 2 K. 2:9.
[27] 2 K. 2:10.

evidence that Elisha would. Transition in leadership always has a fighting chance when old embraces the leadership of the new.

Imagine a great oak has fallen, and the seed that will be planted in its place will take years to mature and grow even close to the way this solid oak must have looked and felt. This is a good way to describe how Elisha must have felt at the thought of stepping into Elijah's shoes. Did he want Elijah to live forever or, was he ready to step up to the challenge of spiritual leadership? Before the very end, the great prophet and his understudy walked and talked a while longer. It is not clear for how long, but it is very easy for this writer to get a mental picture of prophet and prophet-to-be, walking and talking, taking the final steps of one's life and the first new steps of a long journey for the other. After this, a chariot of fire *appears*, along with the horses of fire.[28] As suddenly as this fast-approaching vehicle of God appeared, it disappeared. The fiery chariot and horses were symbols of God's power in battle, designed to illustrate his power is mightier than any opponent! Even though it would seem appropriate that this chariot pick up Elijah and transport him into heaven, it did not happen that way. Instead, God caused a storm with great thunder and lightning. The whirlwind, or storm, sucked up Elijah into heaven's own bosom. And in v.12, it says Elisha saw him no more, but it is clear that he witnessed the deliverance.[29] Imagine Elisha's own emotions, at an all-time natural high, and his reverence for God, at a new level. He 'took hold of his own clothes and rent them in two pieces'. These two powerful verses, more than any other in the text, demonstrate the decisive will of God. In v. 12, when Elisha cried out and calls for his father and the chariot of Israel and the horsemen, would have a testament to the prophet he will

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[28] 2 K. 2:11.
[29] 2 K. 2:12.

miss.[30] His reference is a sign of respect to demonstrate his belief in Elijah as an instrument God was able to utilize in his war against idolatry in Israel. The tearing of his own clothes was symbolic for two reasons: first, it was a sign of mourning; second, Elisha knew from that moment on, he would wear the cloak of Elijah. Let us look at what the cloak meant to Elijah and what it will mean to Elisha.

Both mentor and mentee used the cloak to receive signs from God that it was indeed the time and place for the mantle to be successfully passed. In v.8, Elijah had already wrapped his mantle to smote the water and The River Jordan opened up for the two men to cross. This is a miracle that only God can perform and it gave Elijah the strength to continue to the end of his journey--the actual transition and ascension. Elijah knew his reward was at hand. The cloak was symbolic of a man's authority under God. Afterward, Elijah was taken up by the whirlwind, his cloak fell back to earth.[31] Immediately, in v.14, Elisha takes up the cloak.[32] He is actually taking up the will of God. As Elijah before him, Elisha too smote the water with his newly-acquired mantle. When Elisha struck The River Jordan, it was an indication that he now possessed the power of God. Later, Elisha is seen asking the Lord to demonstrate that these miracles are performed by the God of Elijah and that the power he admired so much in the ministry of Elijah, is now his. God answers by parting the water, so Elisha can go back over Jordan and claim his rightful place in Israel. New leadership, according to these verses, must not only be appointed, but anointed. It is the anointing that makes the difference. So many times, during TICL, men and women appoint and anoint themselves as the heads. No wonder bodies are often in conflict, confusion and chaos. Can a

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[30] 2 K. 2:12.
[31] 2 K. 2:13.
[32] 2 K. 2:14.

political and/or religious coup be far behind? When God anoints a leader, he or she is confident in the spiritual authority they possess under God. Not under man, but under God. When God has blessed a TICL, fortunately, no earthly power can un-bless or dismiss, or blatantly disrespect the will of God. No doubt, every body has a few Ahab's. But God dealt with Ahab. If future generations of leadership will critically reflect on all that Elijah endured, and the months and years it took to accomplish his great ministry, they will not be so offended or easily sidetracked, or distracted when things do not run smoothly all the time. Probably more than any other time in history, perhaps because of high technology, a new generation of leaders are impatient, in-a-hurry, stubborn, willful instead of *willing* and god-less. But this new generation of leaders will find a treadmill-journey if they are not careful. That is to say, they will experience a going-around in circles, and going nowhere fast, if the decision is made to go without God. God makes the difference in leadership, with the appointing and anointing. Even those who inherit a baton from a slew of relay prophets, must be careful to remember the heritage of those who ran before them, and the legacy they will leave to those whose handoff is yet to come. Leaders should always ask themselves, what in shape will they leave the mantle? Still ahead, we will focus on why some drop the baton and soil their own personal portion of the race, and why others run, but get tired, but still run on to a smooth, almost perfect photo finish? But first, let us see what the people had to say about the successful transition in leadership from Elijah to Elisha.

Not one among the fifty sons sent to witness had a doubt that Elijah's spirit had passed into Elisha. They all marveled at The River Jordan opening not once, but twice, for the men to cross over, and again, for Elisha to cross back. And when he did, the fifty from Jericho bowed to him, as a sign of respect. Truly, they knew, this was the man of God. Now, keep in mind, they only

knew that Elijah's spirit had passed in Elisha. They were not sure exactly how. They were not allowed to witness the ascension, and they did not know Elisha had indeed received a double portion of Elijah's wisdom. And it is not hard to deduce from reading the verses here, that with their own eyes, the prophets' sons could see that Elisha was wearing Elijah's cloak. After they paid respect to Elisha, the first question they had was, where is Elijah? Again, this is indicative they did not witness Elijah's ascension into heaven. These fifty sons of prophets were not in a position to see that Elijah had been taken up in a whirlwind, so they begged that Elisha send out a search party to look for Elijah. Elisha tried, in vain, to persuade them not to go looking for Elijah. Finally, he gave them permission to check the valley and the mountains and all in between. But after three days, they returned, without Elijah. It was just as he had predicted, but the prophets' sons had to see for themselves that Elijah was gone from among them forever, and that his wisdom lived on in Elisha. They could now listen, and understand what Elisha was telling them.

We see in these verses that some people can not accept the truth, even if it is standing right in front of them. They were not satisfied until they had exhausted all possible avenues. They looked in the valley, checked high on the mountains, and no doubt, all the plains and brush in between. When their search for Elijah bore no fruit, or sign of the great prophet, then they were ready to accept the truth. They had bowed to Elisha when he appeared wearing Elijah's cloak. This obvious evidence was not enough. Elisha attempted to dissuade them from looking for Elijah. This was not enough. Some people are like that even today. It is very difficult to tell, explain or help them to understand a situation. A leader must practice patience the way Elisha did, even if it means humoring people who will not take no for an answer. During a transition in leadership, some will only believe or accept the new regime when something concrete is shown to them. Again, it is

very important that the new leader, like Elisha, be very patient with his or her new parishioners and co-workers. Remember, patience is a sign of strength, not weakness. Men and women who take up the cloak must strive to never bring dishonor or disrespect to it, for the cloak truly is *the will of God.* It is a lesson that Elisha learned well, and was eager to share with others. How many modern prophets, or those who claim to be, are really men (and women) of God? Elijah never once had to make such a statement about himself. It was, however, made many times through the testimonials of others around him. After a short time, Elisha's own reputation and ministry preceded him, he too, was easily identified as 'a man of God.'

For a time, Elisha remained in Jericho (we know that he did during the search), and word of his amazing power spread like wildfire among the residents. In what appears to be a short time after the fifty returned, the city fathers came to Elisha with a problem that had plagued them for some time. This is recorded as Elisha's first mini-miracle, simply because it is a practical problem, with what could be called a practical solution. Yet, none of them had come up with it. Apparently, some of the water from a major source of irrigation had turned foul. It was killing the crops and affecting the economy of Jericho, and the ability to nurture and feed the citizens. Elisha's solution was simple, but not simple-minded. The answer was to be given to Elisha by the Lord. Elisha asks for a new bowl, which was purely a representation of himself, the new prophet.[33] Salt was placed in the bowl for Elisha. At the time, salt was known by the Israelites to purify and preserve. It was also used in each of their daily grain offerings to the Lord. When the salt was put into Jericho's water supply, it immediately improved. This mini-miracle proved to the people of that city, that God, not Baal, the so-called god of fertility, could heal their land. It also proved there is only one

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[33] 2 K. 2:20

true God, and one may never know how the Lord will present himself/herself. It also proved that in time God will give the new leader opportunities to demonstrate his or her abilities to lead, and lead well. Elijah led well. And Elisha proudly carried on that rich legacy when it was his turn to carry the mantle, and wear the cloak, which today, remains the equivalent of the will of God.

Obviously, a natural, reflective pause is necessary to look again at the two aforementioned models of transition in leadership. One worked. The other did not(See Details in Chapter II). One, some theologians argue, ended in tragedy. The other ended on a high religious note, filled with positives. One model provided key players who would, in the end, turn out to be arch rivals and enemies. And the other beautifully illustrated how the two leading characters stayed the course of love and friendship, mentor and mentee, and finally, spiritual father and son. One model spoke volumes about the roles of incoming, and outgoing generational leadership. The other also spoke volumes, but about deception, jealousy and confusion over power and who should have it. Yet, for all the opposites these two models have, there are many similarities indeed. First and foremost, in each model, God had the final say, despite what (wo)man thought, or wanted. In both models, the successor was anointed by God, and therefore, blessed and/or sanctioned to lead. Both models provided lessons that can, and should be used today. That is what this writer is attempting to do. Both models clearly show the historical significance of the leader's ability, time and calling, as well as how that person answered the challenge. Yes, it may be argued here that for as many things that these transitions did not have in common, they had an equal amount of similarities that make them both, highly compelling models for study. As promised, let us now again look at why the transitional leadership model of Saul and David failed, and why the model of Elijah and Elisha worked so well.

In order to make this case analysis more meaningful, let us go back and review some of the key points in both transitions and look at what drove the process, power. That will mean comparing the transitional test that Saul failed with the successful one that Elijah was privileged to be a part of. Who were these men? And did their backgrounds affect any part of the transition? May this writer suggest to you that it is possible that some of the end result can be traced back to the very origin or beginning of these men's lives. Let us look back at some of the things already shared here about Saul.

High on the list is the fact that he had to be persuaded to take up the mantle. This writer has his suspicions about those with a true calling, and those who are persuaded they are called. Saul even hides himself from his new responsibility as chosen king. Now, true enough, this writer does agree that God probably had several reasons for choosing, and using Saul, but all of those explanations are not clearly revealed in the scriptures, leaving one to *speculate* that Saul had many concerns about his own future as a leader. And though he turns out to be a fairly good king, who is deeply loved by his subjects, Saul's weaknesses tend to overshadow some of his achievements. Does Saul strike one as a confident, intelligent leader? May this writer suggest that in the absence of his physical stature, Saul was a small man, and small-minded as well. Negatively stated, Saul suffered from what psychologists today call low self-esteem. Positively stated, Saul perhaps, like many, who experience transitions, struggle with them. Bridges believes that some struggle with transitions for the following reason. He writes:

> They break our connections with the setting in which we have come to know ourselves, and they awaken old memories of hurt and shame. Growing frightened, we are likely to try to abort the three-phase process of ending, lostness, and beginning. We even twist this pattern around so that beginnings come first, then

> endings, and then... then what? Nothing. It is when we turn things around in that way that transition becomes so unintelligible and frightening.[34]

Not much is listed as reasons for this personal character malady, but it is written that Saul did not think too highly of himself, and was suspicious of others, including Samuel. Later on, Saul's suspicion would focus squarely on David--his successor, a man who also initially thought very highly of Saul. It is safe to say, this lack of confidence plagued Saul, and stayed with him, no matter how much he tried to convince himself that he was otherwise qualified to be a leader. God gave Saul chance after chance to live up to any expectations he himself placed at the throne, but Saul repeatedly fell into his own traps of doom and despair. This wreaked havoc on Saul's mental attitude, and personality, which often seemed split at times.[35] If one caught Saul on a bad day, that person might be subjected to fits of anger and cruelty. On the other hand, Saul could probably be the salt of the earth on a good day. Remember his kindness toward David, then-shepherd boy, who slew the giant Philistine? Saul took off his own battle gear, his own raiment and wrapped it around David. Surely, this would seem a symbolic and great gesture of a man steeped deep in confidence. But, as it turned out, it was only the empty gesture of a man who craved acceptance, love and understanding, as well as the need to rid himself of the two faces he often wore. Some say, Saul was simply misunderstood, or high-strung. His temper had a reputation for taking control, and he lashed out at anyone, and anything that made him feel insecure. Instead, this writer believes Saul missed the mark. He should have lashed out at himself. Maybe God was giving Saul chance after chance to change his ways for once and for all. Each time Saul witnessed the power of God through his successor, David, he would remember what it was like to have that power on

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[34] Bridges, p. 18.

his side. Yet, he refused to humble himself, even to the idea or notion, that God wanted him to have that kind of power again. Saul was tormented, by Saul. Before he was sought out by Samuel, Saul enjoyed a fairly simple and easy life. He was minding his own business and did not fully understand the importance of what was happening and why. And all along the way, God would provide guideposts to lead Saul in an effort to further prepare him for Israel's kingship. But Saul was thickheaded. Remember, this is the man who hid from his destiny, and was shy and slow to step up to the plate of leadership. Once he accepted the inevitable, Saul seemed poised to take up the cloak, or will of God. Saul did great things. He was a powerful warrior in battle, and feared by many for his strategic prowess. Initially, Saul had children who loved and looked up to him as their father. As mentioned earlier, imagine how Saul felt towering over his countrymen, for he was, if not *the* tallest, one of the tallest men in all of Israel. Could the reader picture Saul in North America today, perhaps in the persona of Akeem Olajuwon? Or, Shaquille O'Neal? Further, Saul was not only tall, but attractive and in possession of a certain magnetic quality that drew others to him. In summation, Saul had personality, and the potential to do greater things. God wanted Saul to take advantage of these talents, gifts and qualities, not wallow in the people's comment that he had only killed his thousands, compared to David's ten-thousands.[36] Saul did what some leaders today are very guilty of--he lost sight of his mantle, and God's will. Saul turned his cloak inside out, and that made it look like Saul's will, instead of God's. These are just a few things that are of important note about King Saul. These things shed some light on why the transition in leadership from Saul to David failed. Saul was so jealous of another man's gifts, it

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[35] Ibid., pp.23-25. Here Bridges puts forth scientific evidence that documents how anxieties about transitions can affect one's psychological and physical state.

[36] Dale, p. 176. Here Dale talks about the dangers of one leader comparing him or herself to another leader.

literally blinded him of his own precious, God-given abilities as a leader. Saul turned away *from* God, *on* David, instead of *to* God. Experience should teach modern church leaders that anyone who chooses to turn away, and walk without God, is not a man or woman after God's own heart. Many leaders in the position of senior generation in a transitional situation wrongly believe the younger, junior generation in line to receive the mantle, can not tell or teach them anything. How sad! One of the first things practicing church leaders should embrace is the theory of the learning tree: Until you are chopped down, keep growing, keep learning and keep living because you are not paper yet. Translation: if you are too old to grow, live, learn and help, God probably will chop you down sooner or later. Without purpose, you might as well be paper. At least that way, someone can get some use from the dead tree that you posed as. On a more serious note, leaders can teach textbook humility and biblical humility from sunrise to sunset. Until men and women who will lead are able to practice and demonstrate faith, through humility, it is a moot point to whichever generation they are speaking. Saul refused to humble himself before God, and admit he was on a collision course with disaster. Saul commanded, and demanded respect and humble behavior from all those around him--his wives, children, subjects, and even the prophet, Samuel, and one-time harp player, David. Saul's jealousy, on more than one occasion, caused him to make attempts on David's life. Saul did not come to his friend and beg forgiveness, which would have meant Saul would have had to display a certain humility he did not have. If he were sorry, it was only the sorrow of the fact that he missed! Saul was a sad man, who wasted countless energies

common with David, and how their respective transitions were recorded with so much passion, understanding and confidence. Each demonstrated a willingness to learn from their mentors, love their mentors and stay with them through the course. We know that this sustained Elisha and allowed him to receive a double-portion of Elijah's wisdom. It did not work for David, because the object of his respect and affection, Saul, was weak, paranoid and unable to realistically and intelligently proceed with the inevitable--God's will. So, where Elisha had a willing and loving recipient in Elijah, David was not blessed with such all the way through his transition. But, he maintained a certain amount of respect for Saul, because he was able to hold to the memory of what their relationship was like in the very beginning.

For Elisha and David, the generations in line to inherit their mantles, many parallels bind them in this analysis. Not only are they from similar backgrounds and professions, both obviously enjoyed material things before they were appointed, then anointed. Elisha, like David, never once complained that he missed his biological family during the transitional process. They were both very focused men--focused on the historical transition waiting in the wings. Consider how very focused Elisha was--he refused to leave Elijah on three different occasions. Elisha knew his mission, and wanted to receive his mantle and the double portion of wisdom that would come with it. In looking at both of these soon-to-be prophets, it is easy to see why the job *sometimes* requires youth. These transitional races are not for the physically or mentally weak, and obviously, in biblical transportation, travel mostly meant by one's own foot. Remember how Elijah and Elisha 'walked and talked awhile longer' before the ascension into heaven? Or, about the example of poor, tired Elijah and how a trip that usually only takes a few days, took him forty days and forty nights because he was so exhausted?

Whereas the two key senior transitional players had little in common in their respective approaches and attitudes to the situations at hand, the two men in the understudy positions almost had identical approaches to how they would receive and proceed with the mantle. Elisha, like David, was truly a 'man of God'. His faith proved that he, like his mentor Elijah, possessed the all-important strength of character that leaders must have to not only finish the race, but also achieve the victory. Elisha and David had other things in common. Neither pursued the mantle. Both were called, chosen, and finally anointed by God. Both were carefully prepared for service in the Lord, and yes, both did work with their hands! The feel of God's earth has a way of reminding one, humbling one of where he or she came from--the very dirt or soil on which we walk on, belongs to God. Elisha was a farmer. It is suggested in the scripture that he did not have to, for his father, at the time Elijah came upon Elisha, had several men working with his son. Let us speculate then, that Elisha was a rich farmer's son, who worked because he embraced a certain work ethic. The scripture states Elijah saw him in the field, working with other men. Again, compare this with Elisha's counterpart in the unsuccessful transition. David was a shepherd--another employed outdoorsman! The two even have similar experiences in their time of anointment. Elijah, at the moment he laid eyes on Elisha in the field, knew he was the one and immediately threw his cloak around him. God then gave instructions for the oil to be placed upon Elisha's head. Remember David's anointing? He too, was at work in the field when Samuel came looking for Jesse's sons. When Samuel had seen the seven sons who were home, he initially thought that perhaps the tallest son was the one. But something did not feel right, and that led Samuel to inquire if there were anymore children. Samuel waited for David to come up to the house from tending sheep. And just as in the case of Elijah and Elisha, he knew instantly this was the man 'after God's own heart.' It almost sends a cold chill up this writer's spine, to reflect on how much Elisha had in

David did not turn away from God. He ran *to* God.[45] David was very aware that God is all knowing and all powerful. Therefore, it was virtually impossible to hide anything in David's heart and soul. God even used the generation of David to soothe the troubled spirit of Saul's generation. Perhaps God wanted to constantly remind Saul, with David's daily presence, that it was never too late to give one's heart to God. In his role as incoming leadership, David did his part to reach out to and comfort Saul, as well as remind Saul of his position and place in Israel's history. David's confidence in God also gave him great strength--enough to withstand not only the giant Philistine, but one much bigger--Saul's ever-growing jealousy and hatred. How many leaders today are able to block out the distractions, and focus on the transition by giving God their hearts? How many new generations of leaders can even offer a kind word to the senior, outgoing generation? David did. But, his offerings were ignored, ridiculed, twisted and thrown away. Saul did not want them, nor David. Little did he know that to reject David was not only a rejection of the transition, but also, a rejection of The Almighty. What else on earth could David have done to give this tragic transition a different ending? Or did he do everything humanly possible? Is the blame all Saul's? We will address those questions shortly. First, let us pause to look at David's counterpart, the other understudy in this position paper. It is time to reflect on the role Elisha played in receiving the mantle from his mentor, Elijah.

Elisha's Profile

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[45] Ps. 51.

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Let us look at David's response and attitude preceding, and following the transition. David loved and admired Saul.[43] It hurts to know that Saul's once mutual feelings had turned

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> The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
> He maketh me to lie down in green pastures;
> he leadeth me beside the still waters.
> He restoreth my soul; he leadeth me in
> the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
> Yea, though I walk in the valley of the shadow
> of death, I will fear no evil; for thou are with
> me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.
> Thou preparest a table before me in the presence
> of mine enemies; thou anointest my head with oil;
> my cup runneth over.
> Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
> all the days of my life;
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How did they handle their roles, and how did this behavior affect the psychological and sociological outcome of the transition itself?

David's Profile

To balance the comparison, it can only be fair if we begin with David. He had something from the very beginning that few can only dream, and fewer achieve. David was a man after God's own heart. Did he capture it? How did God feel about David? Let us look hypothetically at this loaded set of questions. No (wo)man canever know, or even guess what God feels, but every man or woman enjoys the pursuit of speculation based on actions and heavenly circumstances that possibly reveal some insight into certain biblical situations. For example, we know from study, that God made, and makes choices. When God chooses a person, or a thing, God will not be satisfied with a substitute or replacement. Again, it is worth repeating, "that when Christ calls a man[sic], he bids him[sic] come and die."[39] This is the best definition of what service to God means. It means your life. It means the willingness to give your whole self, male or female, young or old. It is, in short, your all. And that is exactly what God expects when a leader's turn at bat is now. Just as it is easy to say, and show scriptures that further detail the many examples of God's choices, people make choices too. In fact, God gives people the freedom to make choices, even if they are the wrong ones! God is not trying to hurt His/Her people, or trick them. God is simply giving us opportunities to grow, like the learning trees that we are all supposed to be. In David, the potential seemed endless. God wanted David, and therefore, God sent Samuel to bring David to the task at hand. David's virgin life would require preparation and guidance. For this reason,

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Elijah certainly did not fully understand the purpose of the widow's son's death. That came later. But each time, he even slipped a tiny bit in his true faith for God's work and will, he constantly and feverishly prayed in earnest. He, unlike Saul, turned to God in times of anguish and anxiety. Even when it seemed the masses were against him, and Ahab wanted him dead, Elijah toiled on, in the name of The Father. His faith, even when it appeared weak, stood out as historical high points, for he was a man, chosen to be God's prophet and messenger, not the other way around. Elijah did not have some magic potion that took all his hurts and pains away. Many teachers, preachers and Christians forget so easily that Elijah was a flesh and blood man who felt as men and women do. Elijah felt an amazing love for God. That is why it bothered him to even think something related to his work or beliefs might have let God down. Elijah thought little on his own needs and wants, and he was, by today's standards, a workaholic. Saul, on the other hand, thought very little of anything else, *except* his own desires and needs. And even as Saul's faith in God grew weaker and weaker until it no longer existed, he perhaps may have felt he had gone too far to turn back to God. But there is no such thing. God will always answer those who seek to serve, and know that God is. Elijah's life had a consistent theme that ran like the brook God gave him for water--service. It was Elijah's lifeblood, and he surely did let it flow. Elijah's faith supported this service, and the will of God. Saul's lack of faith supported his belief that everyone was against him and that affected any leadership abilities Saul had left. One leader had goals and ambition for God. The other was blinded by his ambition--and could not see God. One stood on faith. The other stood on shaky ground. One leader was hunted. The other was the hunter. Which should today's leaders identify with? Before we examine that, let us look further at what made one model successful and the other a failure. Certainly, as we have pointed out here, the men in the lead roles are contributing factors. But what about their understudies, the men who would eventually lead?

leaders today would probably question why they would have to tell anyone with a superior education a single thing. Others might not understand the purpose of embracing a creative and forceful young generation, only eager to serve, not disturb. This requires maturity and confidence. Elijah had both. It is worth repeating here that age does not equal maturity. Many old (wo)men are simply aged fools, never the wiser for having lived, because they have not yet learned to listen, to grow, and be still to know that God is. Elijah knew, and more importantly believed, that his God was, is and can do all things. For Elijah, God supplied bread and water through ravens! For Elijah, God supplied a brook when all of Israel cried for rain. For Elijah, God provided comfort in the form of a lonely widow and her son. For Elijah, God sent a son named Elisha who would take up his mantle, at the end of his service on earth. Elijah knew and appreciated all the things God had done, and would do for him. His attitude, and therefore, his approach to the transitional situation before him, was much different than Saul's. Elijah did not, and could not turn away from God. Saul did. These are among the first things that come to mind in this brief, comparative analysis.

Earlier, this writer theorized that Elijah had one great weakness, compared to many that plagued Saul's reign. The difference in having faults or weaknesses begins with one how handles or seeks to address these, as problems, or challenges. May this writer suggest to you that Elijah was definitely aware of his character flaw--a loss of faith in God. Not only is it believable that he knew it was his weakness, he felt incredible guilt for having entertained the type of paranoid thoughts that tempted him to doubt in the first place. Elijah, in his deep and dark loneliness, which at times, must have felt like the black night itself, questioned why he was the only prophet still alive.[38]

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[38] 1K. 19.

is probably not one single leader who can not relate to a feeling of desperation, of uncertainty at some point in their careers. And in consultations and counseling sessions with Christians, this writer would venture a guess that the word depression comes up so often that much about this lone subject is studied so that leaders can properly digest and consume the many facets of depression. Yes, Elijah got depressed, many times. And each time that he did, God, just in the nick of time, would send relief, or a response. This is still true today, not only for leaders, but for all believers. 'God may not come when you want him[sic] to, but he's[sic] right on time' are some of the words from an old Negro spiritual that one can no doubt find plenty of personal examples to support. Where Saul's attitude affected the transition of his leadership to David, so the same is the case with Elijah and Elisha. But the difference here is, apparently both Saul and Elijah had different ideas about the definition of attitude, and they brought those ideas to the transitional table, as well as other ingredients that helped, or hurt the process. What kind of attitude did Elijah have? We know that Elijah had what is consistently mentioned throughout this position paper as the most necessary, and often missing component of transition in leadership--strength of character. Saul, did not have it, because his heart was never in it to begin with. Elijah, on the other hand, was able to persevere, even when he felt lonely and in despair, because he had this strength of character to constantly push him to the next level. In short, Elijah had God *in* him, and with him. He did not have to be told over and over that God was counting on him. Elijah did not hide from his responsibility. And when the time came, he did not fight the next generation of leadership. Elijah took his protégé under his wing and followed God's specific instructions. He tutored. He loved. He shared. Elijah broke bread with his protégé, and counseled him. Elijah took the time to 'walk and talk with Elisha' and eventually, when the time came, he asked Elisha to name whatever he wanted. Does this sound like a selfish person with an immature attitude? Some

and efforts[37] to de-rail a transitional train that by God's own engineering, was full-speed ahead, into a Saul-less future. Unfortunately, Saul's own desperate actions downgraded his own greatness, first into goodness, then to half-heartedness. Saul was like a fierce Texas hurricane, that eventually blows itself out, so much to the point, that forecasters are glad to downgrade it from its first-class status, to tropical storm, then to tropical depression. At the rate he was going, Saul would have never been listed alongside the all-time great hurricanes, such as Carla. He moved ....first to the left, and then too slowly. Saul moved away from God, and lost his strength and position. That lone factor can never be reiterated enough: *Saul moved away from God.* Transition in church leadership can never succeed when the principal players move away from God. Let us now look at Saul's counterpart in this position paper, and some of the contributing factors that made the transition between Elijah and Elisha a success.

Though we certainly do not have as much information on Elijah's background, as we do on Saul's, right away there are some differences that may have had an impact on the transition and the transitional process that led to its success. Like Saul, it is true that Elijah had his weaknesses, or perhaps this writer should clarify that to *weakness.* Where it would seem Saul had many weaknesses and discrepancies, or character flaws, only one such flaw stands out about Elijah. Even though he was a 'man of God' and a man just like men and women today, Elijah suffered through great bouts of loneliness and depression, which sometimes caused him to lose faith. There

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[37] Gary L. McIntosh, *Three Generations: Riding the Waves of Change in Your Church*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1995), p. 192. McIntosh concludes: For church leaders who find themselves dealing with the problems caused by the collision of changing generations in their churches, the best advice is to be open to change. If we struggle and try to fight our way back to the way things used to be, we will expend a lot of useless energy and may drown in our own efforts. Instead of fighting, we need to relax and go with the flow, seeking to understand what is taking place.

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David did not turn away from God. He ran *to* God.[45] David was very aware that God is all knowing and all powerful. Therefore, it was virtually impossible to hide anything in David's heart and soul. God even used the generation of David to soothe the troubled spirit of Saul's generation. Perhaps God wanted to constantly remind Saul, with David's daily presence, that it was never too late to give one's heart to God. In his role as incoming leadership, David did his part to reach out to and comfort Saul, as well as remind Saul of his position and place in Israel's history. David's confidence in God also gave him great strength--enough to withstand not only the giant Philistine, but one much bigger--Saul's ever-growing jealousy and hatred. How many leaders today are able to block out the distractions, and focus on the transition by giving God their hearts? How many new generations of leaders can even offer a kind word to the senior, outgoing generation? David did. But, his offerings were ignored, ridiculed, twisted and thrown away. Saul did not want them, nor David. Little did he know that to reject David was not only a rejection of the transition, but also, a rejection of The Almighty. What else on earth could David have done to give this tragic transition a different ending? Or did he do everything humanly possible? Is the blame all Saul's? We will address those questions shortly. First, let us pause to look at David's counterpart, the other understudy in this position paper. It is time to reflect on the role Elisha played in receiving the mantle from his mentor, Elijah.

Elisha's Profile

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[45] Ps. 51.

Whereas the two key senior transitional players had little in common in their respective approaches and attitudes to the situations at hand, the two men in the understudy positions almost had identical approaches to how they would receive and proceed with the mantle. Elisha, like David, was truly a 'man of God'. His faith proved that he, like his mentor Elijah, possessed the all-important strength of character that leaders must have to not only finish the race, but also achieve the victory. Elisha and David had other things in common. Neither pursued the mantle. Both were called, chosen, and finally anointed by God. Both were carefully prepared for service in the Lord, and yes, both did work with their hands! The feel of God's earth has a way of reminding one, humbling one of where he or she came from--the very dirt or soil on which we walk on, belongs to God. Elisha was a farmer. It is suggested in the scripture that he did not have to, for his father, at the time Elijah came upon Elisha, had several men working with his son. Let us speculate then, that Elisha was a rich farmer's son, who worked because he embraced a certain work ethic. The scripture states Elijah saw him in the field, working with other men. Again, compare this with Elisha's counterpart in the unsuccessful transition. David was a shepherd--another employed outdoorsman! The two even have similar experiences in their time of anointment. Elijah, at the moment he laid eyes on Elisha in the field, knew he was the one and immediately threw his cloak around him. God then gave instructions for the oil to be placed upon Elisha's head. Remember David's anointing? He too, was at work in the field when Samuel came looking for Jesse's sons. When Samuel had seen the seven sons who were home, he initially thought that perhaps the tallest son was the one. But something did not feel right, and that led Samuel to inquire if there were anymore children. Samuel waited for David to come up to the house from tending sheep. And just as in the case of Elijah and Elisha, he knew instantly this was the man 'after God's own heart.' It almost sends a cold chill up this writer's spine, to reflect on how much Elisha had in

common with David, and how their respective transitions were recorded with so much passion, understanding and confidence. Each demonstrated a willingness to learn from their mentors, love their mentors and stay with them through the course. We know that this sustained Elisha and allowed him to receive a double-portion of Elijah's wisdom. It did not work for David, because the object of his respect and affection, Saul, was weak, paranoid and unable to realistically and intelligently proceed with the inevitable--God's will. So, where Elisha had a willing and loving recipient in Elijah, David was not blessed with such all the way through his transition. But, he maintained a certain amount of respect for Saul, because he was able to hold to the memory of what their relationship was like in the very beginning.

For Elisha and David, the generations in line to inherit their mantles, many parallels bind them in this analysis. Not only are they from similar backgrounds and professions, both obviously enjoyed material things before they were appointed, then anointed. Elisha, like David, never once complained that he missed his biological family during the transitional process. They were both very focused men--focused on the historical transition waiting in the wings. Consider how very focused Elisha was--he refused to leave Elijah on three different occasions. Elisha knew his mission, and wanted to receive his mantle and the double portion of wisdom that would come with it. In looking at both of these soon-to-be prophets, it is easy to see why the job *sometimes* requires youth. These transitional races are not for the physically or mentally weak, and obviously, in biblical transportation, travel mostly meant by one's own foot. Remember how Elijah and Elisha 'walked and talked awhile longer' before the ascension into heaven? Or, about the example of poor, tired Elijah and how a trip that usually only takes a few days, took him forty days and forty nights because he was so exhausted?

Elisha was energetic, and so was David. They both had that in common with their health, strength, and of course, youth. Being the junior partner in the transitional process also gave the two men room to grow, room to make mistakes, room to learn and room for greatness! Elisha's potential and eagerness to impress his mentor was such, that he probably would have carried Elijah over The River Jordan, just to make sure he got his reward, and made the last mile of the journey to where he wanted to be. Surely, in all of biblical history, there is only one greater transitional love--that of Jesus and his mantle to the people He died for! Elisha strove to make his spiritual father proud, not only in life, but in death. He did not want Elijah to worry that he would not live up to the legacy. This, again is something that he and David had in common. David wanted Saul to be proud of him, but for his own accomplishments, not something given to him. Remember when David slew the Philistine and Saul's rush to reward him with his own battle raiment? David, in good conscience, could not accept this mighty gesture. He wanted to earn Saul's respect. Little did he know, with each passing accomplishment, Saul loved David less and less, until finally he hated him, he hated his very name. But this did not stop David from wanting his spiritual father to be proud of him. May this writer suggest his own theory? Since Saul was unwilling, or incapable of training David, God was actually David's mentor, and spiritual father. It was God that David looked to for direction, for guidance, for faith and for nourishment. God took up the mantle that Saul threw down, and God symbolically handed the mantle to David when it was time for Saul to be replaced, since Saul had no intention of participating in the actual transition. Here is the example of what this writer referred to earlier as God's will in the transitional process. It matters not what man or woman thinks or wants, God will have the final say in the transition. He did with Elijah and Elisha. The cloak fell back to earth. Let us be mindful

of who threw it back to Elisha, and then parted the river for his triumphant return to Israel. God really had the final say with the transition in leadership between Saul and David. God took the mantle away from Saul, even after Saul was given countless chances to pick up the mantle, pick up the will of God. When the Almighty forever took the baton, it was ready to be passed into the capable hands of David, after God had fully prepared David. There is this commonality between the two younger generations: again, God, when the time came, blessed both with the authority and wisdom necessary to lead the people. TICL.

CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY

The Transition Made Me Do It

It escapes the writer at the moment who may have first been credited with saying there is method to the madness. But it is very clear who first introduced the public to the comedic phrase, 'the devil made me do it'. That credit must surely go to Flip Wilson, one of the first black entertainers to hold a highly-rated weekly television show, in the early seventies. Certainly, it is hoped that after some elaboration here on the writer's methodology, a clearer picture will emerge as to what actually led him to select the models used here , as well as the how and why.

Let us begin with a look at the three models used to illustrate transition in leadership. They include Saul and David, Elijah and Elisha, and last but not least, the personal transition, that is the writer's own: from G.C. Washington to E.D. Seamster. The author will strive for balance with these models, namely with the intent to discuss the success of one, and unfortunately, the problems related to the other, which was considered unsuccessful. As for the personal model, the writer was led to utilize it for the purposes of gaining insight on transition in church leadership: from generation to generation, as well as to share information with parishioners not only at Marsalis, but with the religious community at large. Another reason these particular models were selected is to do a comparison between them and the personal model that is this writer's own. After deep and disturbing study on all three, the writer concluded that these are the models that people, who would eventually make up the context associates, could probably very easily relate..

And since no dialogue had taken place publicly on the personal transition that is this writer's, that further led him to select his own for public view and consumption. It is important that the writer not overlook a mental method that he sought, to provide some form of therapeutic release internally, to preserve his own sanity. In short, it would benefit the writer to air his own feelings about the personal transition he had recently undergone. These are the methods that led to the decisions on what models to use for transition in church leadership: from generation to generation.

FIRST THINGS FIRST:

PREPARATION FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Once it was decided that this subject would be the focus, the writer set out to design a feasible model that would not intimidate or insult any of the potential group from which he was hoping to recruit. First, let us pause here and paint a brief picture of Marsalis Avenue Church of Christ. For a more in-depth portrait, see historical information contained in Chapter I.

Marsalis Ave. Church of Christ, or MACC, has a variety of members and these would be the pool of people offered a ten-week course on transition in leadership. The writer decided to use a series of workshops, interspersed with three sermons on leadership, as well as a pre-test, post-test, member profile and weekly quizzes. Since most of MACC's members are in attendance on Sunday morning, or evening, it was logical that the writer start here with an announcement that the workshops would be made available free to any

who desired them. To reach those members who remained on the church's mailing list, but may have been less active in attendance, it seemed reasonable to run an announcement in the church's weekly bulletin, *The Messenger* (See Appendix page 150 for sample). For the four weeks prior to the start of the workshops, the writer made concerted efforts to recruit members through a combination of hand-delivered letters and follow-up phone calls. The reason: to achieve a more accurate cross-section of what is actually representative of the church. For more information on the make-up of Marsalis, including the economic and membership levels, please see Chapter I. The model was designed with the intent to extract a core group of members from Marsalis. It is important to state here that in the process of development, some of those volunteered on their own, and others were recruited. At the end of the four-week campaign, thirty three volunteered, but the actual workshops were made up of thirty , who attended weekly Wednesday night sessions. Why Wednesday? Why workshops? What happened in the sessions? What were the writer's hopes and intentions? Let us answer those and other pertinent questions on the methodology utilized to reach a desired point of understanding.

Workshops, or classes with open discussion were preferred by the writer during the set-up stage of this process. It seemed to him that people feel preached at enough and needed a chance to air their concerns. Since the writer was after feedback and opinions, this led him to make the sessions more relaxed and that led to the decision to hold the classes on Wednesday, instead of for example, a Monday when people are probably just beginning a hectic week, or Sunday after church, when, unfortunately of people's attention spans are shorter. Sunday night did not seem to make much sense, nor did a session between the

two worship services, because for eight weeks, or longer, one must keep in mind what considerable amount of time a person must try to commit just to participate. Wednesday just happens to be the regular mid-week bible study night at MACC. That made more sense in the conclusion and consideration for people's time with their families and for recreation, as well as their jobs. This writer strove for convenience in an effort to enlist enough men and women to get a cross-section of what is actually representative of the Marsalis congregation. This core group of thirty men and women, 18 female and 12 male, turned out to be a good of the overall church population. MACC is, like a number of black churches across the country. It is more female-oriented and thus, contains several of female concerns, not only about men, but about leadership in general, including at home, in the community and at church.

As mentioned, methods to reach this core group and determine their needs on transition in church leadership included a pre-test at the first class session. The reason this writer incorporated a pre-test into the first workshop, was to discuss the results and then, create a syllabus that would match the needs of members and hopefully , address the things they wanted to talk about. Before the classes, a projected syllabus was handed out, so that members would know the focus of the workshops (See Appendix, Page179). That syllabus was designed to encourage participation. The title itself, the writer hoped, would pique some interest among the curious who had only recently witnessed a transition in generational leadership right before their very eyes. The course title, "God's Chosen Prophets: Do They Lead or Follow?" was selected to reflect at least some of what the writer hoped to include as possible study material and reading literature. The pre-test, it

was hoped, would lend more help to this critical area. The determination of their needs with a pre-test in the first class and a member profile were indeed critical pieces of information that the writer needed, in order to understand more about the participants. The reason a member profile was done early on, was to more closely determine to whom the writer was talking, what kind of money they made, what kind of jobs they held, their marital and educational status, as well as age and gender. (See Appendix Page 159)

Each area of the context model should have purpose, including the how, what, when, where, why and the what. The writer's methods, in what seem to be the most minute details, have method and meaning. The area where the workshops would be conducted, MACC's Fellowship Hall, was chosen because it is away from the main sanctuary, and offered the opportunity to actually gather in a roundtable fashion, full of warmth and potential. Sunday morning clothes and attitudes were shed. This is what the writer was after—atmosphere that would free the participants to openly discuss their worries and concerns, or joys and pride, over transition in leadership. After all, what this particular group believed made up a leader is very worthwhile information to the person, this writer, who would actually have to lead them. These ninety-minute sessions in the fellowship hall were designed to deal with biblical, historical, contextual and future models of transition in leadership. The writer chose ninety-minutes, instead of sixty, because an hour was not adequate time to properly administer the weekly pop quizzes, discuss assignments from the previous week, hand out literature and make assignments for the following week. The length of the class was structured so there would be ample time not to feel rushed and to give participants what they needed: an atmosphere that was relaxed and stress-free for

maximum results. That was the aim with the time and length of the sessions, as well as the meeting place, which remained the same throughout the workshops. It was important to remain on familiar ground. Therefore, the writer sought to never move the class from the basement, where it was quiet, isolated from the other mid-week classes and relatively free from distractions like walking, going to the bathroom and babies in the nursery, which is situated adjacent to some of the regular Wednesday evening classes. The writer hoped to achieve the sense that this class was special, different, truly important, and that all who participated were equal in his eyes, as well as their opinions and concerns about transition in church leadership.

After needs were determined and the class became co-associates with the writer, together we created what would be the second syllabus for the workshops. Again, this was done to give the writer a better overall view of what to include in each subsequent session. It was also meant to instill pride at the very thought that this was a process of inclusion. These context associates were eager to prove they were intelligent and capable, and for that reason, the writer allowed them the space to help him shape the model for this particular ministry. Let us pause here and discuss a brief, chronological portion of the methods for the actual classes that were conducted after the first informational meeting.

Since an expressed desire to learn more about church leadership came out of the first gathering, the class was assigned to read the first half of Lovett Weems' work. This assignment was given out in response to their cry for knowledge. It was very important that the context associates not be led down any certain path that would create a feeling

the writer had a certain agenda, or, was perhaps making an attempt to spoon-feed any of them. They, for all intent purposes, would be equals and associates of the writer, and were free to offer theories, solutions, requests and thoughts. The writer desperately wanted that freedom for these members. It would give a greater insight as to how those members felt who did not sign up for the workshops! At the end of each session, it was determined by the dialogue and discussion of the current meeting, what assignments would be handed out. The writer could afford to operate in this mode because he had a wealth of information and potential study information prepared to distribute. The purpose, again, was to be a part of the direction, not control it, but to flow with it. This group, truly helped chart its own course on transition in church leadership.

A week-by week breakdown is more thoroughly explained in Chapter V. Let us summarize here that weekly tests were done to gauge the understanding of the literature. The writer was able to look at the weekly efforts made by the class and determine whether it would be of more help to move on to the next desired topic, or remain on a current topic for a while longer. Assignments were given out for the next session at the end of each current one. For example, the class was so enthusiastic about Weems, they were ready and determined to finish the remaining chapters for the future session. They acquired the habit of having a test to determine their knowledge on what they had read, as well as enlightened discussion to see if they understood what they had been further tested. (See Appendix Page 181 for sample of exam. You will also notice that the same examination questions were given each week in an effort to create continuity). The context associates seem to appreciate the fact that a team effort, instead of the mentality

of instructor-student only, helped with the level of excitement for the material and for the time they had to bond with one another. It was hoped at the time this writer chose these models and this project that all the volunteers, or context associates would come away with other members with whom they could identify, who felt some of their same concerns, and even respect those of whom they did not agree, yet still love and/or care about them and their needs. That was the reason for the effort to get a good representation of Marsalis.

As stated, each workshop had its theme, based on the previous workshop, which pointed the writer, in the appropriate direction . It was hoped this would make for a smoother and more flowing education on transition in leadership. One thing the writer did not want was to jump here and there, and bounce around on a topic that is already hard enough to digest and understand. So, it was necessary and important that the project have continuity. For that reason, the writer stayed with themes for every session. Each session was closed to others, once the profile of the ministry context was established. The classes were closed to visitors and other members who did not initially volunteer or were recruited. It was designed that way to allow the group to bond, to communicate, to get to know and understand each other. For example: near the end of the project, the context associates were given a quiz on C. Jeff Woods, their reading assignment from the previous meeting. They went through this little quiz so quickly, it was frightening, yet satisfying to witness how fast they had become adept to the concept of study leadership models, be tested on leadership transitions and discussion and dialogue on those. During the final week, the context associates mastered a pop quiz on their assignment, which was to read I Samuel,

chapters 16-31. With the discussion on this model on the table, the class, read together I Kings 19 all the way through II Kings, Chapter II . Aware that this was the grand finale, this discussion was included to show the differences between the two models in transitional leadership. This writer's model in ministry was designed to evoke thought and compassion for the actual process of transition in church leadership, and to include his own for future study and comparison. Just as the writer's fellow associates were expected to study and learn, that was also the purpose for him. The writer, too, had homework that had to be done to keep up with the syllabus and needs of the group, during and after the workshops. To achieve that, it was decided to preach the sermons on leadership to MACC's largest audience: the Sunday morning crowd.

The inclusion theory is never far from this writer's mind. Enough worldly things intimidate and discriminate against the community at large. They should not be made to feel that lessons on leadership are being designed to point out their flaws as leaders at home, at work, at school or in the community. Instead, the writer chose lessons of encouragement and lessons that would also reveal to parishioners that the writer, himself, had a very long way to go to become the kind of servant that Jesus was, and is. These sermons were also designed to commend and honor outgoing leadership, in transitional situations.[1] In this

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[1] McIntosh, pp. 198-204. This author argues vehemently that the following components be reiterated to the congregation concerning the former leader(ship) or generation: (1) Bless the past; (2) Affirm the validity of previous methods and programs; (3) Highlight the biblical principles that underlie the previous methods; (4) Present your new approach as an extension of the past; (5) Illustrate how the new approach carries on the values of the former ministry; (6) Assure the people that you will be carrying on the tried and true biblical principles of old; (7) Listen with love; (8) Communicate that traditions are honored best when they are carried on in new ministries; (9) Be patient and; (10) Trust God to make a way for it all to happen.

writer's mind, it was crucial that this effort be made since the elder generation recently retired is currently minister emeritus, always there, and always sensitive to any comparison. It must be stressed here that the sermons were also seen as a way to include the entire congregation in leadership discussions they were not visibly a part. These were the members who did not sign up to take the ten-week course on transition in leadership and they, perhaps more than the class, needed an outreach effort to show that the writer was, and is, in fact sensitive to their concerns about change. Those concerns include fear of the unknown and possible changes in their particular duties and positions within the church. For those context associates who signed up for the workshops, the sermons were an understanding bonus, a plus, if you will, to further enhance on-going dialogue, discussion and classroom efforts. Those sermon titles are listed here, accompanied the text on which they were based:

1. "When No One Cares"

   (Psalm 142:1-7)

2. "You've Been Around This Mountain Long Enough

   (Deut. 28:`1-14; 1:1-7)

3. "This That I Have—The World Did not Give It To Me

   And The World Can not Take It Away"

   (Numbers 14:23-24)

All three, full-length sermons are included in the Appendix Pages 191, 197, 204.

At the end of the workshops, a post-test was given, in the hopes that the writer would be able to determine how effective the class on transition in leadership was. The post-test questions were basically the pre-test questions asked in retrospect. (See Appendix page

193 for sample of post-test). No tests were given on the sermons preached, but a few, in and out of the class, did personally comment to the writer, that they were needed and delivered with honesty and sincerity. It is important that ministers who are products of a transition in church leadership remember to focus on the fact that some members are more connected to a former leader that they may have spent many years with. There is no reason to forcefully try and sever that fond memory or relationship, but there are plenty of reasons for the person who inherits the mantle, to attempt to forge his/her own relationships and strong bonds with members through study, training, reflection, respect for the former, and prayer constant prayer. Throughout this project on transition in church leadership, the writer attempted to take advantage of the methods that would produce results and move the congregation as a whole to a new level of closeness. The theory of leadership with one head, connected to one body continues to remain the focus of why this writer used a personal model, compared it to biblical and/or historical models, as well as share and incorporate those results that will, hopefully make a difference. In Chapter V, the writer will outline more of what actually happened during the implementation and give more details on the weekly field experience.

CHAPTER FIVE

FIELD EXPERIENCE: ACTUAL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MINISTRY MODEL

First Call for Brave Volunteers: Now that the members of the Marsalis Avenue Church of Christ, the city of Dallas and the religious media had witnessed what this writer will refer to as a very public, generational transition, the mood was set to begin a class that would help determine through a comparative analysis, how individuals felt about old vs. new or incoming and outgoing. To enlist participation, the first announcement was made during a Sunday morning worship service. Second, the proposed class was featured in the church's weekly bulletin, *The Messenger.* This ad ran four, consecutive weeks. To help pique interest in the program, hand-delivered letters were given to a cross-section of members with expectation this would ensure a variety of age groups and people from all walks of life. Recruitment efforts did not stop there. In addition to personal letters, phone calls were made to help encourage what the Marines call, the few, the proud, and the brave."

First Class Meeting

As promised, a class to study the effects of change emanating from transition in church leadership, first met on September 10, 1996. Every Wednesday, through November 12, 1996, the class would meet along with regular mid-week bible study groups. This helped to alleviate any concerns over transportation. Prior to this meeting, a class syllabus had

been mailed to possible candidates, so they would have a clue what to expect. A list of requirements included pen, pencil, paper, bible and an open mind. Thirty three open minds attended the first session. A pre-test was administered, giving the class a positive feel where learning trees could perhaps sprout a few new branches. This very informative, first gathering also enabled the writer to take a member profile. Of the Thirty three enlisted men and women, thirty returned.

The Group Meeting Place

Each Wednesday members met for twenty-minute devotion and some even arrived a few minutes ahead of schedule to greet and embrace others. As the different mid-week classes were dismissed to their various rooms around the church, so was the case with the leadership class. This class was conducted in the Fellowship Hall—a family-friendly atmosphere normally utilized by the church for special occasions (i.e. weddings/baby showers, appreciation dinners etc.). The style of meeting was based on the roundtable concept, which by design is all-inclusive. Every participant was made to feel on equal footing. The surroundings were relaxed and roomy, with an ease that promised to help class members open up and reveal their deepest thoughts and concerns on transition in church leadership and their respective roles in the transitional process.

Other Notes from Week One

The first ninety-minute session, from 7:30 P.M. to 9:00 P.M., produced a multitude of data, not only from the member profile, but also from the recording, which was used to tape this and many other discussions. In the first week, class members were asked what issues concerned them the most about transition in church leadership. There was also initial reaction to the present transitional model and how the class differed on what things should change. To help class members deal with understanding transition, assignments were given for the next week, including reading material, which made a substantial impact on the class. This structure of a real-class concept, with teacher and student, complete with homework, inspired many who had not been in a classroom situation for a long time.

Week Two

Earlier, this writer mentioned the syllabus handed out to prospective students. Before we go further, it must be shared that the particular focus was outlined for the class with title, description, length and possible rewards for all willing to take up the challenge. The course title was, "God's Chosen Prophets: Do they lead or follow?" The course promised to deliver answers to questions relevant to transitional leadership on four levels. They were: biblical, historical, contextual and future models. By the second week of the class, excitement, about what might be learned during these four phases was higher than expected. This time, class members came from the church devotion with regular Wednesday night members, and started a second mini-devotion in the Fellowship Hall to

pray for the success of combined study on transition in church leadership. The group returned with vigor and vitality, ready to discuss what they had read, an exciting first half of a book by Lovett H. Weems, Jr.[1] At the start of this session, the group engaged in lively class discussion about the assignment. Each class session also featured a short standardize test to gage the understanding of the material (See Appendix page 180 for sample). These pop quiz-like tests reinforced what the students of leadership were there to learn: how they felt about change and the two leaders deemed responsible for that change.

Week Three

By now, it had become expected that there would be a pre-test on the previous week's assignment, and a discussion and review afterward. Sometimes these open conversations were very stimulating, particularly at this session. The group had finished the second half of Weem's book on leadership, and they were raring to flex their religious muscles on the leadership subject. At the end of the session, a new assignment was given—read the first five chapters of Hans Finzel's book.[2] The following week expected to be prepared for a quiz on the material. Once the class was established, the sessions were closed to visitors and other members. The reason for this was very simple—this was not only a lesson on transition in leadership, but also a lesson on relationships. It was crucial that this group bond with each other across economic, class, and marital lines, as well as philosophical,

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[1] Weems Jr., *Church Leadership*.
[2] Finzel, chapters 1-5.

age and sexual agendas. They had to talk about transition in church leadership, in order to move beyond the transitional and the entire process of which they had been a part.

Week Four

After the customary quiz and discussions, they were given the weekly assignment: to read the second half of Finzel.[3] At this juncture in the project, a funny thing started to happen. Discussions inside the Fellowship Hall were beginning to leak out to the general church population. It was not so much the content of the classes that was being discussed, as it was general opinions on the subject of transition in leadership, particularly the transition at Marsalis. Someone once said a 'little knowledge is a dangerous thing.' In the case of these class sessions, a little knowledge actually turned out to be a very helpful thing.

Week Five

Knowledge continued to flow. This writer continued to listen to some tapes of previous sessions, gleaning any missed nuggets or opportunities to shine the spotlight on issues that perhaps did not get enough attention. The discussions were provocative and honest. Each session proved to be more relaxed than the previous. Somehow, out of their Sunday attire, having relaxed attitudes and wearing casual dress made for a more Christian-friendly learning process.

Weeks Six, Seven and Eight

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[3] Ibid., chapters 5-10.

After the arrival to classes beyond the halfway point, review and discussion, as well as pop-tests became the norm. The group should be commended for keeping the sessions fresh, with each new assignment. By the time the sixth meeting rolled around, the discussion turned to the latest book by Douglas W. Johnson (week six).[4] The group also responded extremely well to a book by Robert D. Dale (week seven). [5] Finally, during week eight , the reading assignment was given concerning the leadership between Saul and David.[6]

Week Nine

Sensing the mission is nearing the end, class members moved from historical, contextual and future models on transition in leadership to the biblical. The assignment: Read the story concerning the leadership between Elijah and Elisha.[7]

Final Week of the Class

After the quiz, a post-test was conducted and a discussion followed. There was a great deal to finish. The class was able to preview the biblical model on transitional leadership between Saul and David, as well as the transition between Elijah and Elisha. The class

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[4] Douglas W. Johnson, *Do not Know Much About Being A Leader In My Church*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996).

[5] Dale, *Pastoral Leadership*.

[6] I S. chapter 16-31

[7] I K. 18:-2 K. 3.

ended on a high note with a discussion that ran well past the final bell. What could be more gratifying than the model of Elijah and Elisha , the peak of the class's learning experience, with almost everyone offering contributions and explanations about how these two models differed and why. As the lights in the Fellowship Hall were turned out, the last class member walked up the stairs, leading to the open area and began to mingle with other parishioners who had not taken the class on transition in church leadership. How appropriate that the location of the sessions would be in the basement of the church. For at the conclusion, it could be noted, all walked up to a higher level of light and understanding.

Days after the class ended, positive comments began to circulate to other members about the actual content and quality of the leadership comparisons and points of the cases. In fact, it might be argued that these classes very well served as the introduction for training future leaders. Many of the class members possessed the passion to lead, in some capacity. Clearly, a great number of them desired to lead their families better, or demonstrate better leadership abilities on their job, and/or at school consequently, the class went beyond expectations. Post-tests were administered in order to determine the full effect the project had on class members.

Just as journalists examine the who, what, when, where, why and how of any story, let us do the same here. First and foremost, Transition in Church Leadership: From Generation to Generation was a model developed to ascertain the following goals:

1. to determine why some transitions are successful and others are not
2. to determine what issues and concerns leaders and parishioners have about the process
3. to help change negative attitudes about the process through discussion and study
4. to highlight some problematic areas that needed to be avoided and addressed before the physical transition took place
5. to develop a model/paradigm that can be used/implemented for similar situations
6. to determine whether or not it is healthier for the predecessor to remain in the context or to physically exit

To reach the aforementioned goals, the following steps were taken. First, members were offered a ten-week leadership class to help determine why some transitions are successful and others are not. Second, membership profiles were taken in order to gage the results and determine what issues and concerns context associates had about transition in church leadership. On a weekly basis, the associates were invited to freely participate in honest discussion and dialogue that stimulated subject material they had been given for reading assignment. In order to highlight some of the problematic areas that existed before the physical transition took place, the writer used the generational transition they all had experienced—his own! By doing this, the writer, along with context associates, was successful in outlining what things should be done to make a transition smooth and complete, as opposed to those things that should be avoided that make for a bumpy transitional ride. And finally, by an almost overwhelming consensus, it was determined by the context associates, that the former leader should seriously consider not remaining on

the scene after he or she is retired or resigned. This conclusion was reached after a series of biblical comparisons, studied and discussed in the classes, as well as three sermons. At the end of the two and a half month period, every context associate had a valid reason for his/her opinion on the aforementioned.

This is the foundation for the replicable model. That foundation includes the stated objective—which is something this writer was able to state even before one class was called to order. The syllabus detailed exactly what the goals for the class would be, the length of the class and all supplies necessary. It is important, for anyone seeking to copy this model, that they make their model of ministry available to all, free of charge. Convenience is equally important, as this writer chose to make his model of ministry available on the same night of the church's mid-week bible study. Other components include the complementary sermons that further expounded on the elements of a successful transition in church leadership. The series of sermons were designed and delivered to reiterate what was observed in the class, and for the benefit of those who did not sign up for the class. By preaching and teaching on a particular model in ministry, just as was done with the leadership model, one is able to get the lessons, message across in a positive way, without singling out negative factors, and in particular, people who may have contributed to the hindrance of something on the verge of success.

This ministry project was developed to learn the following:

1. what were the major dynamics of transition in church leadership
2. what could be done in order to facilitate a smooth and healthy transition

3. what issues should be addressed prior to the physical transition that might impede or obstruct the process of transition.

During this project, this author learned several interesting facts about himself, others and the church in which he does ministry. Let us begin by dealing with the latter first. One thing I learned is that during the process of Transition in Church Leadership, losing a former, or long-standing minister is like losing a member of the family.[8] It seems to be a little more complex than death itself. I also discovered that if the minister remains in the context from which he resigns or retires, no one really understands his (her) function or role. Therefore, it is incumbent upon persons entering into the process to clearly have titles, work duties, and responsibilities that are clearly outlined and articulated to all persons involved.

I also learned that people do have a number of issues, concerns, and ideas about Transition in Church Leadership-- some are good, bad, weird, insightful and thoughtful. It is necessary to have as many of those issues discussed in a healthy forum, so as to abate, if not eliminate anxieties, apprehensions and misunderstandings that could be detrimental to the entire process. If a process is to be a healthy and successful one, the person receiving the mantle must have a clear understanding of the church's theology, as well as church politics, traditions, and make-up of the congregation. He or she must know weaknesses and strengths of the body. This author learned that if one is to survive spiritually, emotionally and physically, one must have and maintain a healthy relationship

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[8] Friedman, *Generation to Generation,* pp. 168-186.

with God, a sincere relationship with one's staff, and a partnership with the leaders. All the ingredients are essential for an individual who desires to be successful during this turbulent period.

This writer has experienced a turbulent few months associated with the personal transition in the midst he now finds himself. What he has learned is, it takes a certain level of maturity and spiritual grounding to survive such a formidable challenge. Has this writer matured? Yes. This writer also learned that patience and diplomacy are not only virtues, but also a must. Quite possibly, the most significant learning's related to the context include the fact that a body will always be in turmoil if it has two heads. Growth is severely limited, or completely halted if members of a body, or congregation, are left with the slightest doubt about who is really in charge. Though great love and affection may be poured upon a long-time leader, who has retired or resigned, that love must never be confused with loyalty. The loyalty and respect an in-coming leader needs immediately can impact what happens down the road.

Another significant fact this writer learned concerns who sets the tone in a transition. It can never be the old regime. If that happens, members will always seek the old head for counsel, wisdom and comfort. The new head must set the tone and lay out his or her mission statement at the mantle exchange. It was further discovered that transition in church leadership is not a product, but a process. In other words, transition in church leadership takes time to develop, mature and bear fruit. Consequently, one must be prepared to work patiently and proceed carefully. Another important thing to note is—

resistance to change. Change is all around us, yet transition in church leadership, is viewed with great suspicion. Perhaps this writer will provide a compelling model of this particular ministry that would enable others to learn, to welcome change, or better yet, embrace the inevitable.

The theological issues that were learned are as follows:

1. the God factor must always remain at the center of what is being done before, during and after the transition. In a word, God's spirit and presence must be welcomed as a permanent fixture and a part of the transition.
2. successful transitions found in the bible (Moses to Joshua, Elijah to Elisha etc.) took place when the predecessor was no longer on the scene. On the other hand, in those same models, it was discovered and determined that when the predecessor remained in the context, chaos and confusion ensued.

There were only two suggestions made by Dean J. T. Roberson, mentors and peer associates. One was that the title of the project be changed from transitional church leadership: from generation to generation to Transition In Church Leadership: From Generation to Generation. Dean Roberson also insightfully pointed out that the initial title suggested an interim transition, rather than a permanent and on-going one. The second suggestion was that the writer not include anything in this project that would be misinterpreted as pejorative or negative about the former leader and his constituents. This

could only, in their opinion, increase a level of anxiety, which was already dangerously high.

Phases Completed

This author has now successfully completed Phases I, II and III. The following persons will serve as members of the nomination of the final examination committee:

Mentors

Harold A. Carter, Sr., DMin, Ph.D. and William A. Jones, Jr., DMin

UTS Faculty Member/TBA

Consultant/Dr. Derrick Hawkins, DMin

Peer Member/Dexter Wise

Context Associate/Stephen Cook

Outside Examiner/Pauline N. Puckett,DMin, United Theological Seminary

Results of the Model

The transition in church leadership, from generation to generation, was designed to be analyzed with the following tools: first, a member profile was given. Second, a pre-test was administered. Third, a post-test was given. The aforementioned tools were given to ascertain the effectiveness of the program.

In the appendix the reader will find a compilation of the data that was gathered (see appendix pages 150-210 for charts and graphs). They will be found in the appendix in the same order in which we shall summarize the findings. This will be done so that the reader may easily follow along and refer back and forth.

Summary/Analysis of the Results

The following section includes data gathered from the membership profile. This data was collected in an effort to ascertain a brief, biological sketch of each participant.

1. Who volunteered?

82.5% (25 of 30) of all persons who participated volunteered. These context associates signed up after learning about the classes from the church bulletin and/or from fellow members. Many signed up out of sheer curiosity, while several wanted to demonstrate their support for the project and this writer. Others expressed an interest in being a part of an adult class taught by the writer, since this was, in fact, a first.

2. Who was recruited?

16.5% (5 of 30) of the participants were recruited by the writer. It is important to note here that all were male. This was an intentional move on the part of the writer in order to include a larger male perspective, as well as some who had openly expressed concern

about the transition, and who were not necessarily supporters of this writer. In other words, these persons, or stragglers, came into the class on middle ground. This writer also believed these persons would be crucial in determining the effectiveness and/or portability of the proposed model.

3. How many were male?

39.6 % (12 of 18) of the participants were male. This percentage is slightly higher than the number of males that actually attend (MACC) Marsalis Avenue Church of Christ. It is also worth noting that five of the 12 that participated were actually recruited. This was done for two reasons: one, this writer wanted to make sure that the class was gender-balanced. Second, there would have to be equity among the context associates. Within the framework of the Churches of Christ, usually, females have little or no ecclesiastical voice. Therefore, in a transitional situation, men help set the tone and determine the direction of major transitions (e.g., like the hiring of a new minister).

4. How many were female?

59.4% (18 of 30) of the participants were female. This percentage is just a few percentage points lower than the actual demographic makeup of the church. The opposite can be said of the women than was noted of the males. All volunteered. Later, we will examine the attitudes of the female participants and how their majority experienced less anxiety overall about transition in church leadership.

5. How many were members for more than five years?

75.9% (23 of 30) of all participants have been MACC members for five years or more. This is indicative that longer-tenured members were more interested not only about the transition they had just witnessed, but also about transition in church leadership. They were the participants who had known both old and new senior ministers, and were, perhaps more curious than members with fewer years invested.

6. How many were members for less than five years?

24.1% (7 of 30) of all participants have been members of the church for less than five years. Their desire to participate is harder to ascertain than the former group. One is left to speculate that perhaps their collective eyes are on the future and their respective roles are in a somewhat new atmosphere. It must be noted that this group is equally important because their perspective might prove to be more objective, but less comprehensive, since they may not fully understand the structure and history of the church.

7. How many were second generation members?

13.2% (4 of 30) of all participants were second generation members. These persons, though in the minority, represent the group that not only participated and observed the latest transition, but earlier ones as well. One point to note, the former minister had

preached to the last three generations of members, therefore, it is somewhat difficult to determine how these members would respond to new leadership since the majority have only had one senior minister since their arrival at MACC. Finally, we will examine, to some extent, how the older members responses differed from the younger ones.

8. How many were African descendants?

89.1% (27 of 30) were of African descent. This should be no surprise since the demographic makeup of the congregation is predominantly African American.

9. How many were European descendants?

6.6% (2 of 30) were of European descent. As stated earlier, this percentage is not a surprise. However, what is interesting, is that this number is significantly higher than the actual percentage of the congregation, which totals six European members (33%).

10. How many were Hispanic descendants?

3.3% (1 of 30) of all the participants was Hispanic. Like the European descendants, Hispanics make up a small percentage of the congregation's membership. In fact, there are only four Hispanics in the entire congregation. Therefore, 25% of all Hispanic members were represented in the project. Unfortunately, the church's makeup is disproportionately lower than the larger community, which is 45% Hispanic.

11. How many had 12 years of school or more?

92.4% (28 0f 30) of all participants indicated they had at least 12 years or more of school. This is not surprising since the membership of MACC, as indicated, in the Ministry Context paper, has an above average percentage of highly educated and professional persons. This number of educated persons represented a positive for this project because it suggested that the participants had the academic prowess to think critically, argue persuasively and make helpful comments about transition in church leadership.

12. How many had 12 years of school or less?

6.6% (2 of 30) of all participants had less than 12 years of school. Again, this is no surprise since the educational background of the membership is somewhat above average. Initially, this group represented potentially those who would be the most vulnerable in the process of the transition our (MACC) church leadership.

13. How many had graduate degrees?

13.2% (4 of 30) of all participants had graduate degrees. It is interesting to note that this group's educational level is slightly lower than the congregation's overall makeup. There are 18 principals, 26 assistant principals and 70 school teachers attending MACC. Therefore, it is no surprise that some of the participants had advanced degrees.

Furthermore, we felt those with different educational levels would have different perspectives on transition in church leadership. But this expectation never materialized. In a word, there were no significant differences in this group's responses than that of the others.

14. How many were between 18 and 30?

23.1% (7 of 30) of all participants were between the ages of 18 and 30. This group, according to some sociologists, represents the Buster generation.[9] It is worth mentioning here that this is the fastest growing group at MACC. It is also interesting to note, that for the past 20 years, until recently, this had been the slowest growing group. This may be due to the fact that the former minister, and the present eldership are all over 60 years of age. Perhaps because of the arrival of this writer and present minister, a larger number of Busters are now being drawn to the personality and programs of the current (leader)ship.

15. How many were between 31 and 45?

42.9% (13 of 30) of all participants were between the ages of 30 and 45. This group, according to some sociologists, fall into the Boomer category.[10] This group also represents the second largest and second fastest growing segment of MACC's membership. Again, this increase may be attributed to the following: first, like the

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[9] McIntosh, *Three Generation,* pp.129-153.
[10] Ibid., pp. 73-107.

Busters, they are attracted to the new minister; second, they are drawn to a more enthusiastic worship experience; third, they are drawn to new and innovative programs (like child care, Rites of Passage for children, family night and Kingdom Builders).

16. How many were between 46 and 60?

26.4% (8 of 30) of all participants were between the ages of 45 and 60. This group, according to some sociologists, can be classified as the Builder generation.[11] This group, more than any of the others, is parallel to that of the membership. It is almost a mirror image of the makeup of MACC's congregational numbers.

17. How many were 60 and over?

6.6% (2 of 30) of all participants were over the age of 60. The most interesting thing about this group is, although it represents the smallest and fastest declining group in the church, and this project, it is undoubtedly the most influential, or powerful group at MACC. This group has the most influence because five of the eight members of the leadership (eldership) fall into this category.

18. How many had annual income under $20,000?

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[11] Ibid., pp. 25-56

19.8% (6 of 30) of all participants had income under $20,000 a year. This group, economically represents the bottom 20 percent of the church's economic base. It is also important to note that most of these persons are single, non-professionals, which account for the lower income.

19. How many had annual income between $21,000 and $30,000?

33.0% (10 0f 30) of all participants had income between $21,000 and $30,000 a year. This group, economically, falls into a slightly economic category than the one before. These persons also represent the blue collar segment of the church. It is also worth noting that these incomes are individual, and not household. It may also be helpful to mention that the cost of living in Texas is much lower than other parts of the country.

20. How many had annual income between $31,000 and $50,000?

36.3% (11 of 30) of all participants had income between $31,000 and $50,000 a year. This group, economically, represents the majority of individual incomes at MACC. It is also worth noting that this group is the group that provides economic stability to the entire church. Again, it is worth noting that these numbers only represent a portion of the household income. Finally, this group is made up of mostly professional, white collar workers.

21. How many had annual income over $50,000?

9.9% (3 of 30) of all participants had annual income over $50,000 a year. This group, represents the smallest segment of the congregation's economic base. However, it is important to note that they also represent one of the most involved and committed of all the groups. Furthermore, this group represents the middle-class portion of the congregation and are employed as either executives, or other specialized areas.

22. How many were married?

46.2% (14 of 30) of all participants were married. This is not to say that they had never been married, but only that they were married at the time of this project. Further comments will be made on this subject in the subsequent questions. It is also worth noting that this group's numbers are reflective of the congregational makeup.

23. How many were single?

39.6% (12 of 30) of all participants were single. This group represents the fastest growing population in the church—single, African-American women. It is also worth noting that of all the single persons signed up for the project, only two of them were male. This is consistent not only with the national trend, but also with the congregational trend at MACC.

24. How many were divorced?

19.8% (6 of 30) of all participants were divorced. This group, according to current data on society and the church, is also on the rise. But we are happy to report that this group represents a minority within this writer's ministry context. Perhaps, this is true because among Churches of Christ, divorce is not considered an immediate option for problem marriages.

25. How many were widowed?

3.3% (1 of 30) of all participants were widowed. This group is one of the largest groups in the church, mainly because MACC has a large population of members over the age of 70. Only a few in this group have remarried since the loss of their spouses.

26. How many have had multiple marriages?

6.6% (2 of 30) of all participants have been married more than once. This group represents one of the smallest groups in this author's ministry context. Again, this is due to the strong, theological stance against divorce. It is also a tribute to the church's strong ministry to families, in general, and married couples in particular. There are several occasions for married couples to take vacations and/or retreats with other loving,

Christian couples within the congregation. In fact, this ministry is one of the model programs in the entire church.

27. How many had children?

66.0% (20 of 30) of all participants had children. Again, this population is one of the fastest growing in the church because of the programs designed to meet the needs of families. This group is also particularly interesting because these persons have some experience with transitions—family transitions. It was also thought that this group would be the most concerned about the recent transition at MACC, mainly because families with children would be more concerned with instability and uncertainty. It is important to note however, there was nothing found statistically to substantiate this claim.

28. How many had grandchildren?

16.5% (5 of 30) of all participants had grandchildren. This group is a relatively large group at MACC. It is suspected that this group is also growing rapidly in society because of the number of teen pregnancies, which have created a younger set of grandparents. The transition from parenthood to grandparenthood is more common. Again this group would perhaps be able to deal with transitions with greater ease, and less anxiety.

29. How many are leaders in any capacity?

39.6 % (12 of 30) of all participants said they were leaders in some form or fashion (church, school, job, community and home). This group was important to this author because they, more than any other group, should have understood the inevitability of transitions and the need to have infrastructure for the process. It would also seem that this group would be more sensitive to leadership issues than others, who were not in positions of leadership.

Gender Analysis:

Pre and Post-Test Results

This researcher began with the expectation that there would be a significant generation difference in attitude(s) concerning transition in church leadership. In fact, the sub-title *Generation to Generation* implied just that. But the unexpected results of the project showed that the differences were not generational, but gender based. Therefore, the details of the results that focused on gender were not summarized, but a chart with the overall statistics can be found in the Appendix, page 190. 208

The following section contains the responses of the male and female population before and after the classes. These instruments were collected and compared in an effort to ascertain attitudinal and philosophical changes. They were also utilized to determine whether or not the sexes felt differently about transition in church leadership. The economic and generational issues will not be compared because there were no significant

findings. Therefore, the writer's final comments will address the differences in the male and female test population.

1. How many had anxieties about transitions in general?

Initially, 66% of the females felt some anxiety about transitions. On the other hand, 34% indicated that they had no anxiety about the process. At the end of the process, when they were asked if they still had anxieties about transitions (Post-Test), 12% did, while 88% no longer had anxieties about transitions. 33% of males questioned in the beginning said they had anxieties, while 66.4% did not. But on the post-test results, none of the men expressed any anxieties about transitions. An incredible 100% answered that they no longer felt ill-equipped to address basic transitional issues. Here we see a significant attitudinal change in both groups. Obviously, the project made a credible impact and eliminated or addressed most of their concerns. (See appendix page 208 for diagram)

2. How many had anxieties about the transition that took place at MACC?

71.5% of the females answered yes on the pre-test, compared to 28.5% who said no. Yet, the post-test revealed a much more startling figure. When asked if they still had anxieties about the transition at MACC, 17.5% still had anxieties about the MACC transition, while a whopping 82.5% no longer had anxieties. Meantime, on the male side, 100% answered they did have anxieties on the pre test. This figure went down some on the post-

test , where 33.6% of the males indicated they continued to have anxieties about the transition at Marsalis, even after the classes. Again, it is quite apparent that the project affected the mindset of both groups. They both felt much more comfortable with the recent transition in leadership: from one generation to the next. (See appendix page 208 for diagram)

3. How equipped did they feel to handle transition in church leadership?

The majority of the female respondents felt fair (49.5%) or good (27.5%), while a much smaller number (5.5%) indicated they felt very good about their abilities to handle transition in church leadership. Afterward, in the post-test , 77% answered very good. This shows an increased level of awareness and confidence in their respective abilities, after the classes. In the male pre-test, they were evenly split (50%) on their feelings about abilities to handle transitions in church leadership. This same group, however, in the post-test , showed a dramatic climb in confidence, with 91.3% answering they felt very good about their capabilities. According to this data, one could conclude that the respondents felt quite competent about their skills, relating to transition in church leadership. (See appendix page 208 for diagram).

4. How did they feel about they former minister remaining in the context in any capacity after retirement/resignation?

11% of females responded in the pre-test they felt very good about the former leader staying, while 71.5% felt good about it. Some weeks later in the post-test , only 9.9% felt very good, while 82.5% felt fair, a slight shift from the pre-test. 28% of males felt very good about the former minister remaining, while 58.1% greeted the decision with a fair response. Males in the post-test , like the females, dropped slightly from the very good category. Here they rated their feelings on the former minister staying at 16.8%, as compared to the previously mentioned 28%, while 66.4% now moved up, or stayed at fair. Joel Gregory sums up the sentiments of the group by suggesting the following: "Under no circumstances should the tenured pastor be allowed an ambiguous relationship with a younger man brought in to follow him."[12]

5. Did they believe sermons would impact their attitudes?

In the pre-test, 60.5% of the female group answered yes, while 39.5% said no. Dramatically, after the classes during the post-test , 100% agreed the sermons on transition in church leadership impacted their attitudes, with a definite change for the better. 74.7% of male respondents felt the sermons would not impact them, while 25.3% thought they would. Also in dramatic fashion, the males were proven wrong. The sermons (word of God) had a decisive impact on their outlook, opinions and attitudes on transition in church leadership. 100% answered that yes, indeed the sermons did have a positive impact! Therefore, this author highly recommends that the preached word of God can

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[12] Gregory, *Too Great A Temptation,* p.321.

strengthen one's confidence in the transfer of power from one leader and generation to the next. In a word, preach the Word. (See appendix page 208 for diagram)

6. How many felt that classes on transition in church leadership would strengthen their faith in the process?

Females, before and after, were pretty clear that the classes would be a help to them, in both strengthening their faith, and aiding their overall level of understanding. Before the classes, 93.5% percent said yes, and after in the post-test , 100% answered yes. 25.3% of males, on the other hand, initially believed they were already strong enough in this area, while 74.9% believed they would benefit from the process. The post-test , however, revealed a less-confident male, because the results show 100% in complete agreement that after the classes their faith was definitely strengthened by the entire process. Classes, therefore, on transition in church leadership, are very necessary and vital links between the past and future.(See appendix page 208 for diagram).

7. How many felt that open dialogue and/or discussion strengthened their understanding and confidence on transition in church leadership?

50% of females surveyed in the pre-test believed this kind of exchange would help them to better understand transition in church leadership. Yet, in the post-test , 100% admitted the open dialogue and discussion experienced in the classes helped to strengthen their understanding and provided them with more confidence on the subject of transition in

church leadership. Ironically, on the pre-test males and females had exactly the same statistic of 50%. They also stated, as did the females, in the post-test , that the rate of understanding after the classes was at 100%. Sarcastically put, this is perhaps the only place in human history, where men and women agreed. (See appendix page 208 for diagram)

8. How many felt that reading literature on leadership in general and transition on church leadership in particular, enhanced their appreciation for the process?

Here, females were again evenly split in the pre-test, at 50%. Yet after the classes, and after many had the chance to absorb the information and literature, women responded in the post-test at the rate of 88%, compared to only 12% who did not feel this method enhanced their appreciation for the transitional process. 66.4% of men in this group initially felt that reading the assigned literature would help them appreciate the process more, while 33.6% did not agree. Yet, after the post-test , the figures were flipped, or reversed, with 66.4 percent changing their minds to say "no" the literature did not particularly help enhance their level of appreciation for the process. Most of the men argued that the literature, though interesting and helpful, did not address the dynamics of transition in church leadership. The only author they felt that had adequately addressed the issue of transition in church leadership was Richard D. Dale? (See appendix page 208 for diagram)

9. How many said the new minister should make changes immediately?

77% of the female respondents agreed in the pre-test that the new leader should make changes within the first three years, while 23% thought he/she should wait. After the classes, there was a slight increase in the total who voted for change. Women moved up to 82.5 % for changes immediately, while 17.5% were opposed after classes. Only 17% of the men said yes to changes within the first three years, while an incredible 83% wanted things to remain the same. In the post-test , it is clear to see that some attitudes were changed with the following figures: 74.7% of the male group now favored change early on in the new leadership, while the opposition dropped to 25.3%, a huge decline from pre-test results. Although, both groups agree that changes should be made early on, all articulated the same concern—they felt that too many changes early on by the new leader(ship) could have ominous consequences. Both groups constantly referred to the David and Saul model, while others stated that a certain amount of tension and confusion would accompany every transition and the will of God would transcend all problems.(See appendix page 208 for diagram)

10. How many felt confident that participation in this project would enhance their appreciation for a new minister?

55% of females said they felt good, while 28.5% responded fair. The other 16.5% felt very good about what participation in this project would do for them. In the end, 71.5% came away feeling very good. That compares to 16.5% , prior to the classes. Males seemed less sure that their participation in the project would enhance appreciation for a new minister.

58.1% of the male group felt good in the pre-test, but 41.9% only felt the project had a fair chance. After the project, the post-test answers were a lot different, with 25.3% of males responding very good and 74.7% up to the level of good. (See appendix page 208 for diagram).

11. How many had participated in a project like this before?

None of the respondents had participated in a project like this before. (See appendix 208 diagram).

12. How many were looking forward to participating in a project like this?

93.5% of the women said they were looking forward to the classes, while only 6.5% were not. Yet, when asked in the post-test , if they were glad they did participate, 100% truly were. The men were all looking forward to participating in the project, which includes those who were recruited. In fact, many of the men requested they be kept informed on proposed classes on leadership for the future. (See appendix page 208 for diagram)

13. How many agreed to participate in order to understand the subject more?

All the women started the classes with this same goal in mind—to understand the subject more. On the other hand, 50% of the men said they agreed to participate in order to understand the subject more. As stated earlier, some of these context associates were recruited.

CHAPTER SIX

REFLECTION, SUMMARY, AND CONCLUSION

The model of ministry chosen by this student, by this writer, has proven to be a successful one that others can emulate by using it as a base, as a formula, or format to build and develop on. For those who do not need as much help as the saints at MACC, the level of training, length of sessions and literature can be modified to fit a particular need and/or situation. But one thing is clear for any church in the market for help with a transition from generation to generation—without teamwork, all good intentions will simply remain just that. When this writer reflects back on what has happened over the last few months in his personal transition, as well as what has happened his entire life to prepare him for this exact historical moment, it is certainly true that he could not have done it all alone. There were roads filled with potholes that the writer was not eager to travel, let alone lead others down. There were nights when it seemed the joy of the morning would never appear again, and that has always meant that the darkness suffered by others is probably deeper still. Through this project, the writer's heart was given a new level of humility, and a greater compassion for others and what they would like to bring to the leadership table. Some were very expressive about their needs and desires. Others were frustrated to the point, it was hard to express what they wanted to see in a leader, and in a transition from former to future. This writer's job was to pull everyone together and prepare us all for the greatest race of our lives. The Christian relay team is one that must not lose, and therefore, must be more prepared to go the extra mile. All in this writer's academic, athletic and theological background has helped to shape and prepare him to challenge

Satan, take up his baton, and run that great race in whatever position his team needs him in, from day-to-day, hour-to-hour, minute-to-minute. This writer has learned that leaders must be flexible, shift gears when necessary, speed up when that's called for, and slow down at the precise time God says be still.

At the beginning of this model of ministry, and even before the personal transition, this writer was in a tremendous hurry to run away with his vision, his dreams, his ideas for the church. Just as most young, inspired-filled professional (wo)men, this writer wanted to make his mark, and get an early start. This project has taught the writer to pace himself for the role of leader. Part of this writer's inspiration comes from an athlete greatly admired by millions. He's an international star with a God-given gift—speed. Dallas native, and more importantly, Oak Cliff's favorite son, Michael Johnson, is one of the fastest men in the world. Few doubt he is the swiftest in the United States. His unparalleled achievement of double-gold at the Atlanta Games in 1996 allowed the world community to glimpse what folks in Oak Cliff already knew: Johnson, individually, is a world class athlete. But it is not because he shatters track and field records. Quite simply, it is because he's a leader. And where he is, others are inspired to follow, to emulate, to aspire to.

In sporting conversations, armchair athletes often debate this man's ability to make the transition, mentally and physically, from the 200 to the 400, or even to the 100. A leader must often shift gears and constantly be prepared to guide the unpredictable flow of his group's needs, emotions and problems. In Johnson's case, few, other than those he trains with, know the joy he gets from racing on American relay teams. Even in controversy, he

did what a leader would do—he stepped aside to give the U-S its alternative chance at winning gold in the 4x100 relay. He also let his winning speak volumes, instead of acknowledging those who publicly tore him down out of jealousy or spite. In doing this, Johnson was able to show his millions of fans, from Oak Cliff to Okinawa, what a winner, a leader should be—disciplined, dynamic and divinely in tune with God, his ability to lead, to run, and to inspire. If you had this man on your team, where would you put him and why?

The most important thing in a leader's mind should be how best to serve the group they lead and help them win. If one can picture a church or organization like a relay team in the race of life, a leader's position, would then be more pivotal to the outcome of that race. Therefore, like Michael Johnson, some leaders need to understand the benefits and what it takes to make the transition from one race to another, and from one position to another, going where they are needed most. Today, it might be the anchor leg—to give or energize the community on to victory. Next week, a good leader may have to begin or run what is known as the first leg. This, in our hectic Christian lives, is sometimes a very necessary tool to jump start and motivate tired soldiers. They run to follow a good leader. Other times, the position is in the pack—second or third leg. This kind of transition is positive proof that a good leader is capable of acknowledging with his or her actions that their way is not the only way to win the race. As for the question of where to put Johnson if he were on your relay team, there can only be one answer: last leg. Traditionally, Johnson always runs this position on the team because he is considered physically and mentally able to make up any lost ground, or mistakes that others have made. If someone drops the baton,

or slips behind during his or her turn with the stick, then that last leg has one final shot at victory. And for those of us who have witnessed Johnson cruise at the start of a race, and come back to finish, and pass everyone, we know that he has some experience in making the most of the last few meters.

This author, however, ran the 4x100 relay for Booker T. Washington High School in Shreveport, Louisiana. There are some interesting facts and insights one should consider about a relay team. One, the person that runs the last leg will experience something that those who run the preceding legs will never experience. That is, crossing the finish line. The person who runs the first leg has the responsibility of doing the following: he or she must ensure the team gets off to a fast start without jumping the gun. When this is related to transition in church leadership, the first leg represents the foundation or cornerstone. Every structure must have a good and solid foundation if it is to endure the hardships, pains and tribulations of life. The bible teaches us that the foundation of the church, or the person that ran the first leg, is none other than Jesus himself.[1] The Christian race started on a hill called Calgary, passed through a borrowed tomb, wound its way beyond a cemetery, sprinted by Jerusalem, where it was given to the Apostles to take unto the uttermost parts of the world.[2] Now the baton has been passed to millions of people who have been commanded and instructed to run the same race, over the same track and in the same manner that Jesus did. We are taught to emulate Him. Second, the person running the first leg must also remain in his or her lane to avoid disqualification. This means that a leader must run a pure race, sanctioned by his or her coach, God, who is the author and

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[1] Ac. 4:11.

finisher of our faith/race.[3]In order for a leader to avoid the penalties of ecclesiastical disqualification, he or she must steer clear of even the appearance of any improprieties because perception, to some, is reality. The third thing any member of the relay team must do is hold on to the baton, which represents the weight and responsibility of the ministry. It is also worth noting that if a baton is accidentally or deliberately dropped, the entire team suffers and the outcome of the race is affected by this costly mistake. Fourth, the baton, at the appropriate time, must be passed to the next runner. The point is, when the baton is passed from one person to the next, it represents the transition from one stage of the race to another. In relation to transition in church leadership, the passing of the baton represents the passing of one leadership to another, from one vision to another, from one frontier to another, from one generation to another. What is crucial, however, is that the runner at the end of his duty, must freely and anxiously and volitionally and enthusiastically hand off the baton to the next appointee in the race. If this is not done properly, the race can be precluded and impeded by this act of selfishness and arrogance and paternalism. This affects the outcome of what might have been a highly successful transition, or race. The body is not designed to run effectively with two heads, just as it can not run without a head. In both cases, the race is in great jeopardy, and can not last beyond a short time in an interim position. The runner with the baton, the head, must emerge, take charge and run the race he/she has seen in his/her dreams, visions and heart. His or her body, will follow because they will be able to see the runner with the baton, or mantle, which is symbolic of the anointed prophet who wears the cloak. Naturally, it would be ideal if the runner at the end of his/her life's race would freely pass the baton and

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[2] Ac. 1:8.

support and cheer for the young runner now rounding God's track. But we are not always prone to ideal situations and circumstances, but that does not mean that the race is finished, or must be stopped. In dealing with transition in church leadership, the race may slow down for the baton to be handed off, willingly or otherwise, but the race itself never stops to nurse something small and negative, or otherwise distracting to the cause of Christ. There are those who will not finish the race, because they get caught up in logistics…but we must never lose sight of who is carrying the baton. These leaders, male and female, can experience the oneness that a head and body has once it comes together and is united toward the same goal. TICL can only be successful if the head, and the baton, are firmly in place and the leader is set to take over, as soon as the handoff is completed. There are no races won, with two leaders, or two runners holding the same baton. Both, or their entire team, risks disqualification. So it is with the church—two heads confuse the body. Who should they run with? Who will they listen to? Who will lead? Which is more qualified to do so? We sing a song that says 'time is filled with swift transition'….so, too is the relay race. Only a split second marks the clock, before that baton is out of one hand and into another. This is the same kind of transition that needs to take place in church leadership. In the blink of an eye, the baton, or mantle, is passed. Some of the problems of two hands on one baton can be cited in *T o Great A Temptation*. Dr. Joel Gregory provides countless examples of what happens to a body with two heads, and two hands, on one baton: division, strife, sin and political maneuvering for position on the track. That's why it is so critical that leaders be in possession of what to do with the baton once it is passed to them. An ill-prepared runner will drop, slip or fall with the

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[3] He. 12:2.

baton, and therefore, constantly stay behind in a race that is tremendously hard to play catch-up to. But again, before one can inherit this mantle, or baton, his or her lead-in runner must always look ahead, with eyes on the prize. It is imperative that runners never look back. Picture in your mind, how the arms of the lead runner leans back, not the eyes. The next runner begins to jog ahead, first slowly, then full-tilt until his or her body is almost in line with the predecessor's hand. At the exchange, the new leg, or leader, then passes the old, or former runner. The transition is complete, swift and successful. The coveted baton, or ministry, is in the hands of the leader who will guide according to God's law, and his or her vision for the future. The body, or church is now squarely in line to connect with that head, or new leader. And though parts of the body are unsure of what their positions will be on this 'new' team, they line up, some out of curiosity, others out of fear, to be a part of history, to connect with the transition they have just witnessed. Remember how the sons of prophets waited near The River Jordan for what turned out to be a generational transition from Elijah to Elisha? They sensed something spectacular was about to happen, and they wanted to be a part of it. And sure enough, when Elisha crossed back over Jordan wearing Elijah's cloak, these young men knew Elisha had been appointed, and anointed to accept the race of his mentor and spiritual father. This writer must now forge ahead, and take up the race where his mentor left off, and run the kind of race that God has blessed, the one that started on Calvary.

After much study, research, prayer and efforts to produce a workable model about transition in church leadership, the writer is finally in a position to look back and confidently say this model can be utilized to help others to learn and value the need to shift

gears to accommodate the needs and desires of members, without compromise to one's own integrity. This model is not written in the stone, as stated before, and will work with additions, or deletions. That all depends on what state, or stage a church is in at the particular time of implementation. One thing the writer can recommend is that the model be used well before the scheduled transition. That, in this writer's learned opinion, would save a lot of heartache and misunderstandings. It would be this writer's suggestion that if a congregation knows well in advance of the actual transition from one generation to the next, that they begin to *require* that all members participate in on-going sessions, in small groups. The reason the writer can make this suggestion is he found most people, in and out of the ministry context, fear change, even if it is good for them. Consider this: without change, there would be no evolution, no solution and no contribution. Transition in church leadership must include all of those factors to reach its next appointed level in history. Each leader is set to bring to the table change, theory and practice, or he/she will have no real purpose. Leaders, without question must demand of themselves, an ever-*changing* mission statement that is capable of representing the many facets of Christian life and commitment. Certainly, with growth, responsibility and the needs of one's group to look after, things change, people change and what they need to survive also changes. A mission statement can certainly be an effective tool for churches in transition because it helps keep the lines of communication open. This statement is simply the leader's vision for the church, including long and short range plans. It may be reiterated over and over in a variety of ways—from the pulpit, in the weekly bulletins and in one-on-one sessions.

Let us pause here to highlight the fine points of this writer's model of ministry—transition in church leadership. Before implementation of the model, planning is crucial. Those plans

should include how you will get the word out and who your target audience is. Are you focusing on a specific group, or will you target a wide sampling or variety? You may remember, this writer, for four consecutive weeks, utilized the church's written bulletin of announcements, as well as personal letters and phone calls. A syllabus served as a guide to what the class would aim for. One of the most refreshing and invigorating things this writer learned from the model was how high the passion level was for several of the context associates. For example, one main theme was constantly echoed by the group: the former leader should not remain in the context once he or she resigned or retired. This concept, not totally foreign to the writer, crossed all age, sex and economic barriers of the group. All were in agreement on that. From high school graduates to college graduates, that was the mood, the feeling, the belief.

Another area of the model once context associates are seated that will require caution, as this one did—material and discussion and tests. Make sure that the handouts of any reading material has been thoroughly researched and can be applied to your situation, whether it is for discussion, testing, or analysis. Never, ever approve or require reading from context associates that might be viewed as negative and/or a statement of condemnation of the former leader. After all, this would be doing the very thing one is supposed to be teaching as up coming of a leader. And even in open, honest dialogue, never engage in group conversation of comparisons between the former and current leader. Even if these topics begin innocently enough, there is always room for misunderstanding. What the author recommends for future models that seek to emulate this one—inclusiveness. If it is possible, try to get a commitment from the outgoing

leadership that they will participate. This can do two things—one, if that person agrees, his/her presence will bolster the need for such a class, especially if eventual context associates or members see this participation as an endorsement of the project. Now, understand, once that person is in the class, it may limit what some of the associates may want to talk about, if things could be more easily related if that person were not in the room. Personally, this writer feels that the former leader's participation in the model would far outweigh any discomfort some may have at his/her presence. Why? Because members would get to see and hear the attitudes and perceptions the former leader has about transition in church leadership. And members would also get to see the interaction between two leaders in a less-threatening environment. Are they friendly? Is there mutual respect? Is the former bitter? Is (s)he helpful in the transition? Is (s)he jealous? Is (s)he silent in the midst of the transition?

Because this writer did not have the former leader in his personal transition as a part of the ministry model, all the more effort was put into making the project a starting point that would not alienate the former leader, or anyone who was/is a staunch supporter. This writer was aware that there were people in the group who firmly supported the former leadership, over the new, and that there were also people who were 'wafflers' who stayed on the fence or in the middle of the road. Yet at the end of this ten-week course, the writer is proud to say those doubters or non-supporters changed their views, and more importantly, their actions toward the new leadership.

Again, the importance of the link sermons brought to the model is defined by the inclusion theory. How can lessons on leadership be taught to others who do not voluntarily sign up to be context associates? What's the best way to reach this massive group? The answer for this writer was a series of sermons, on the busiest day of his ministry—Sunday. Better yet, Sunday morning worship. Here, hundreds were treated to a mini dose of what the leadership project was all about. Again, it is imperative that the material selected is complimentary and respectful of the outgoing leadership, especially, as in this situation, if the former has been both mentor and spiritual father. One must never forget the past, and where it has brought us. These sermons must not be heavy-handed or laced with critical comments on leadership. Instead, they should be reflective and filled with gratitude for the lessons the new leadership has learned, and hopes to learn in the future. If one is conducting a course on transitional leadership, certainly he or she had better take the high road. There is absolutely no space in this picture for combativeness, pride, sneak attacks or divide and conquer tactics. Descendants of former slaves are certainly in no position to take on the antics of the slave master. Transition in church leadership, from one generation to the next, can never be simply taught, it must be *lived.*

After some of the results (see chapter five) began to come to light, this writer felt an air of vindication, simply because he learned there were others who felt the way that he did. He was, and is not alone. And there were feelings of anxiety that were actually brought to the surface, and dealt with. This gives one a sense of accomplishment. It is hard for the writer to teach, preach and conduct this kind of project when, in fact, every word uttered out of this mouth is up for dissection. That can make communication a dead-end street with little,

or no hope for growth. But if others who follow this model will hasten to God's throne, the lessons on transition in church leadership will shine through, above the drone of the devil's noise and beyond the bickering of any politics for position. This writer has learned, and clearly understands, each new generation bursts on the scene, or is introduced. How will your church handle the next wave of its leadership phase? This writer can only hope and pray that he has given you some religious food for thought with his conclusions on transition in church leadership, from generation to generation. It was my destiny to be here, and to do this ministry model.

APPENDIX 1

THE MESSENGER

The Messenger
(Sample of the Advertisement Placed In Church Bulletin)

Announcement:

Extra / Extra, Read All About It. Coming Soon:
A Class will be offered over a ten week period to do the following: Address Specifically the questions. Issues and dynamics of Transition In Church Leadership: From Generation to Generation. For more information, please pick up a class syllabus from Bro. Seamster's office of in the foyer after Morning and Evening Worship

APPENDIX 2

PRE-TEST QUESTIONNAIRE

Pre-Test Questionnaire

Please Answer The Following Questions: Y, N, VG, G, F or P

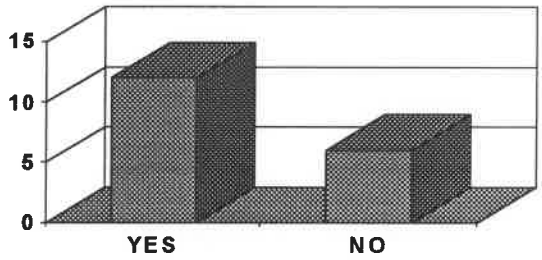
1. Do you have anxieties about transitions in general?
2. Do you have anxieties about the transition that has taken place at MACC?
3. How equipped do you feel about your ability to handle transition in church leadership?
4. How do you feel about a former minister remaining in the context in any capacity after retirement or resignation?
5. Do you think sermons will impact your attitude on transition in church leadership?
6. Do you feel classes on transition in church leadership will strengthen your faith in the process?
7. Do you feel that open dialogue and/or discussion will strengthen your understanding and confidence in transition in church leadership?
8. Do you feel that reading literature on leadership in general and transition in church leadership in particular, will enhance your appreciation for the process?
9. Do you believe that the new minister should make changes within the first three years?
10. How confident do you feel that participating in this project will enhance your appreciation for a new minister?
11. Have you ever participated in a project like this before?
12. Are you looking forward to participating in a project like this?
13. Did you agree to participate because you wanted to understand the subject more?

APPENDIX 3

PRE-TEST (GRAPHS/CHARTS)

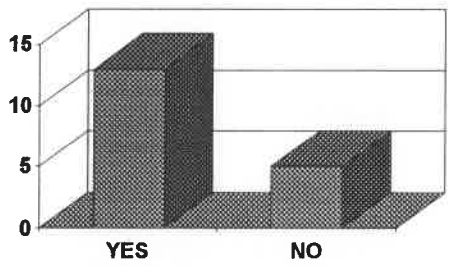
FEMALE PRE-TEST

QUESTION 1: Do you have anxieties about transitions in general?



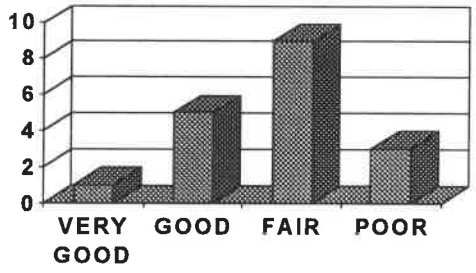
FEMALE PRE-TEST

QUESTION 2: Do you have anxieties about the transition that has taken place at MACC?



FEMALE PRE-TEST

QUESTION 3: How equipped do you feel about your ability to handle transition in church leadership?

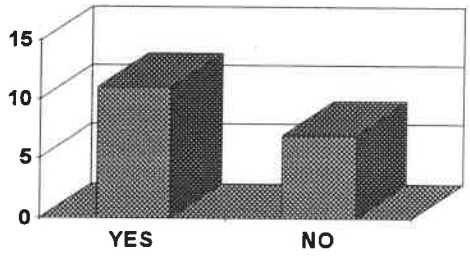


FEMALE PRE-TEST

QUESTION 4: How do you feel about a former minister remaining in the context in any capacity after retirement or resignation?

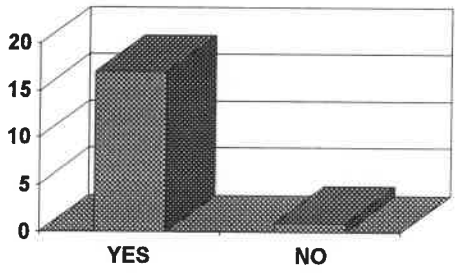
FEMALE PRE-TEST

QUESTION 5: Do you think sermons will impact your attitude on transition in church leadership?



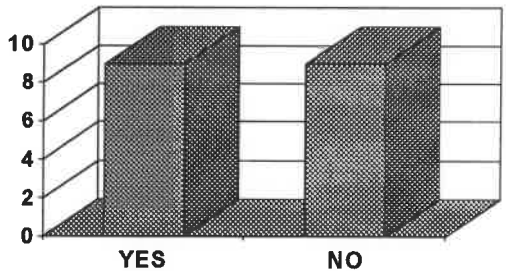
FEMALE PRE-TEST

QUESTION 6: Do you feel classes on transition in church leadership will strengthen your faith in the process?



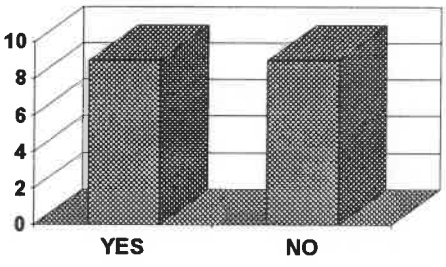
FEMALE PRE-TEST

QUESTION 7: Do you feel that open dialogue and/or discussion will strengthen your your understanding and confidence in transition in church leadership?



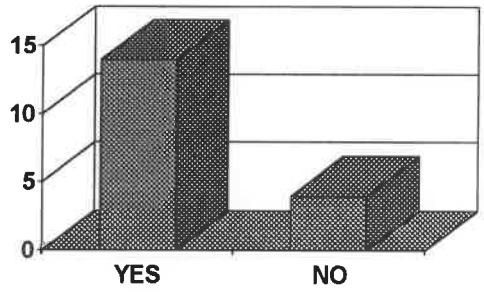
FEMALE PRE-TEST

QUESTION 8: Do you feel that reading literature on leadership in general and transition in church leadership in particular, will enhance your appreciation for the process?



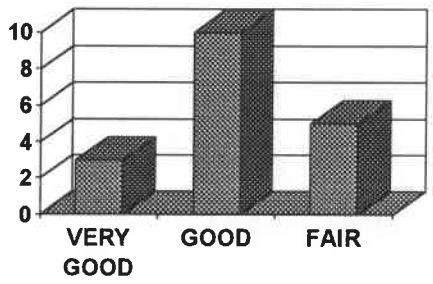
FEMALE PRE-TEST

QUESTION 9: Do you believe that the new minister should make changes within the first three years?



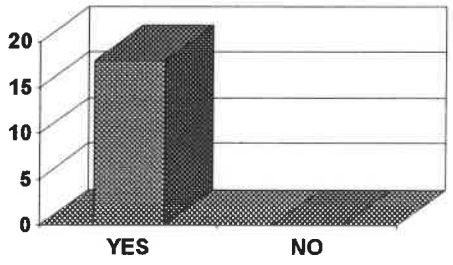
FEMALE PRE-TEST

QUESTION 10: How confident do you feel that participating in this project will enhance your appreciation for a new minister?



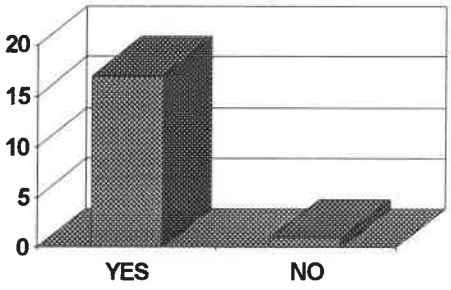
FEMALE PRE-TEST

QUESTION 11: Have you ever participated in a project like this before?



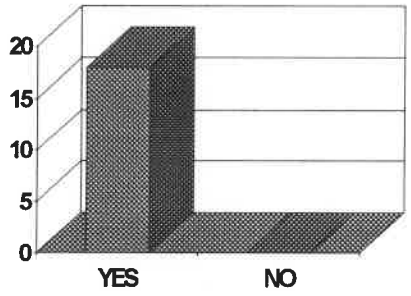
FEMALE PRE-TEST

QUESTION 12: Are you looking forward to participating in a project like this?



FEMALE PRE-TEST

QUESTION 13: Did you agree to participate because you wanted to understand the subject more?



MALE PRE-TEST

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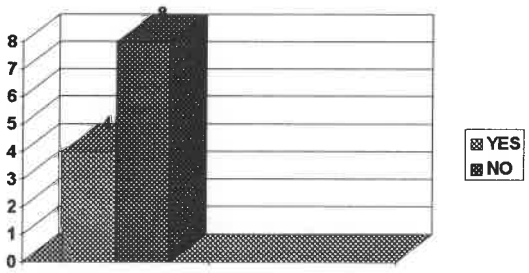
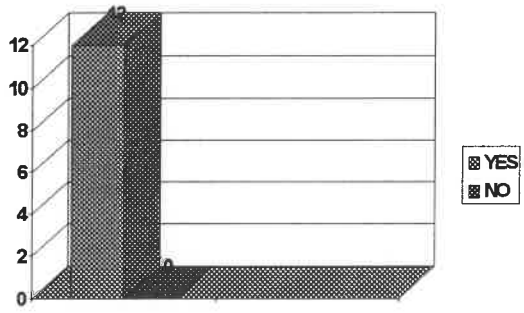


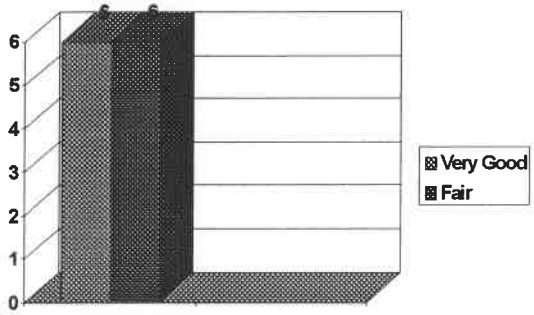
MALE PRE-TEST

Question 2: Do you have anxieties about the transition that has taken place at MACC?



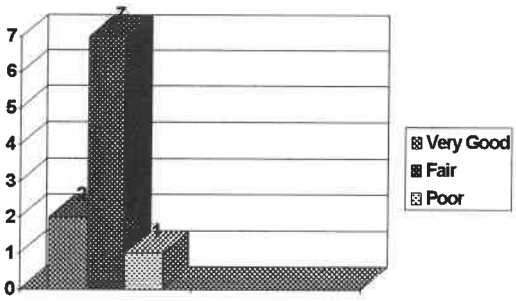
MALE PRE-TEST

Question 3. How equipped do you feel about your ability to handle transition in church leadership?



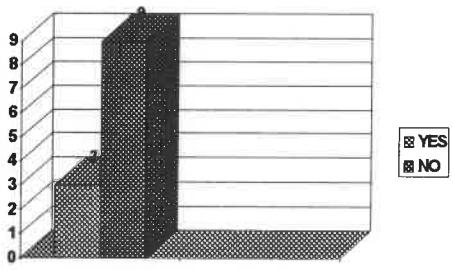
MALE PRE-TEST

Question 4. How do you feel about a former minister remaining in the context in any capacity after retirement or resignation?



MALE PRE-TEST

Question 5. Do you think sermons will impact your attitude on transition in church leadership?



MALE PRE-TEST

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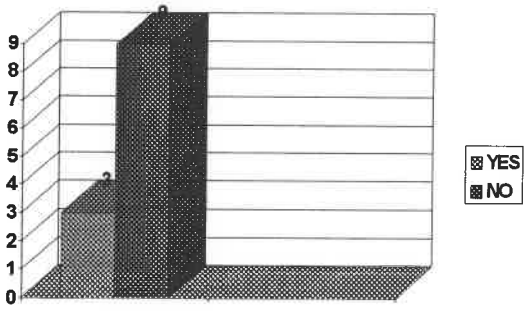

MALE PRE-TEST

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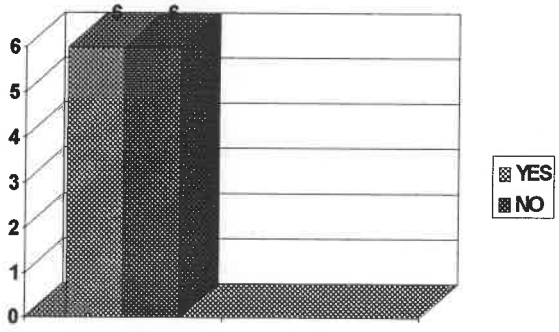

MALE PRE-TEST

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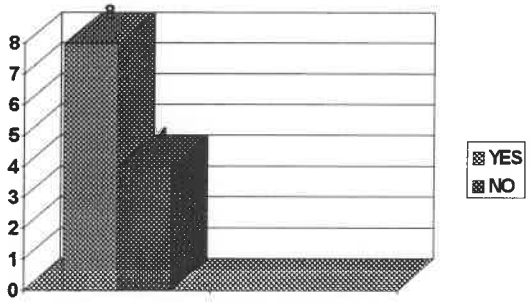
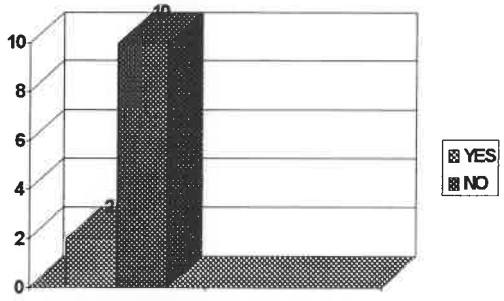


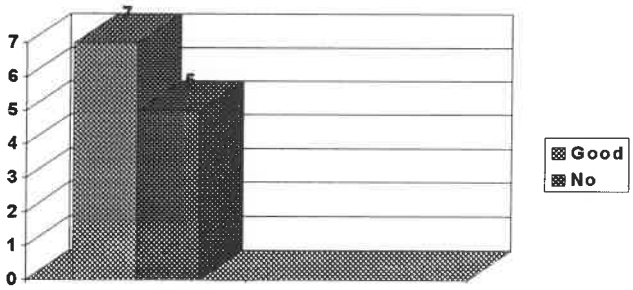
MALE PRE-TEST

Question 9. Do you believe that the new minister should make changes immediately?



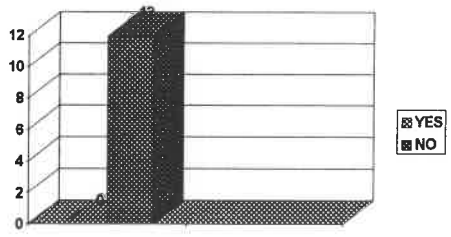
MALE PRE-TEST

Question 10. How confident do you feel that participating in this project will enhance your appreciation for a new minister?



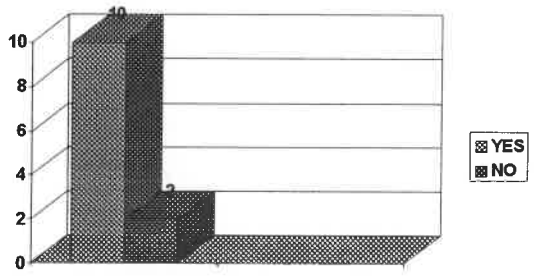
MALE PRE-TEST

Question 11. Have you ever participated in a project like this before?



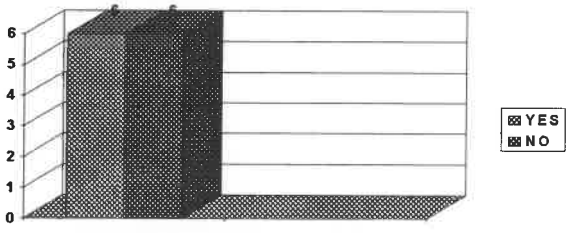
MALE PRE-TEST

Question 12. Are you looking forward to participating in a project like this?



MALE PRE-TEST

Question 13. Did you agree to participate because you wanted to understand the subject more?



APPENDIX 4

MEMBER PROFILE

Member Profile

1. Did you sign up voluntarily?
2. Were you recruited?
3. Are you male?
4. Are you female?
5. Have you been a member for more than five years?
6. Have you been a member for less than five years?
7. Are you a second generation member?
8. Are you of African descent?
9. Are you of European descent?
10. Are you Hispanic or other?
11. Do you have more than 12 years of school?
12. Do you have less than 12 years of school?
13. Do you have a graduate degree?
14. Do you have a post-graduate degree?
15. Are you between 18 and 30?
16. Are you between 31 and 45?
17. Are you between 46 and 60?
18. Are you over 60?
19. Is your annual salary under $20,000?
20. Is your annual salary between $21,000 and $30,000?

21. Is your annual salary between $31,000 and $50,000?

22. Does your annual salary exceed $50,000?

23. Are you married?

24. Are you single?

25. Are you divorced?

26. Are you a widow or widower?

27. Have you been married more than once?

28. Do you have children?

29. Do you have grandchildren?

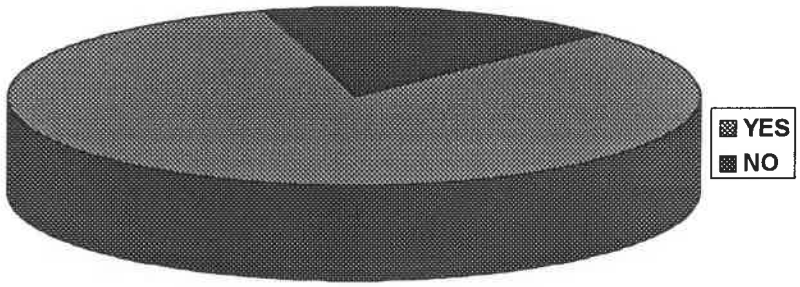
30. Are you a leader in any capacity (e.g. work, school, community, church, etc.)?

    If yes, explain:

APPENDIX 5

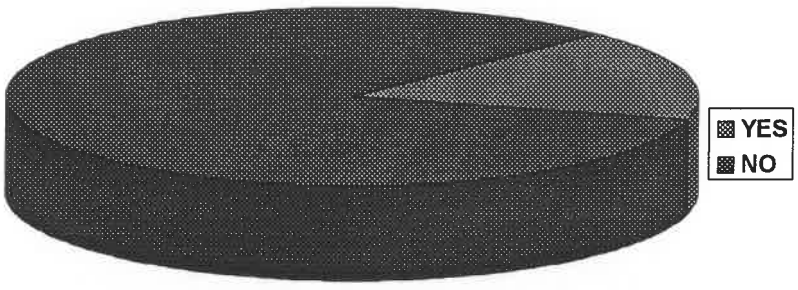
MEMBER PROFILE (CHARTS)

MEMBER PROFILE



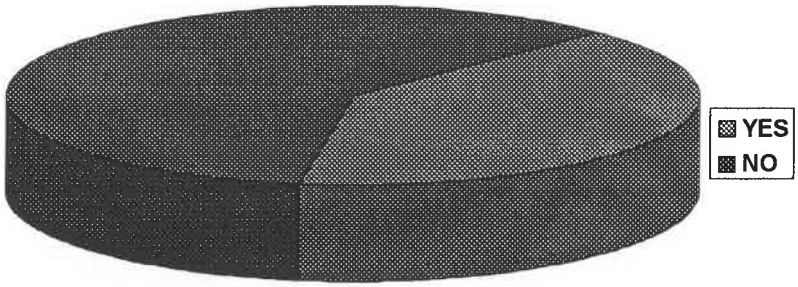
QUESTION 1: Did you sign up voluntarily?

MEMBER PROFILE



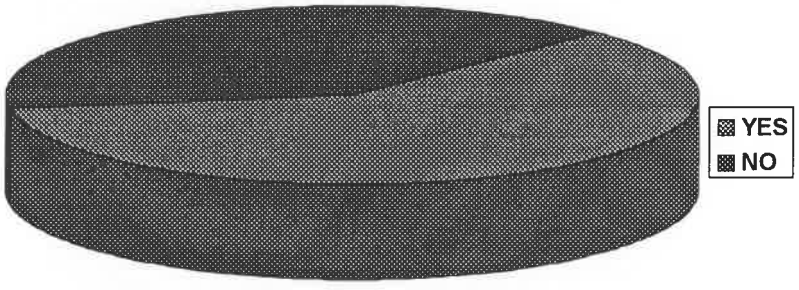
QUESTION 2: Were you recruited?

MEMBER PROFILE



QUESTION 3: Are you male?

MEMBER PROFILE

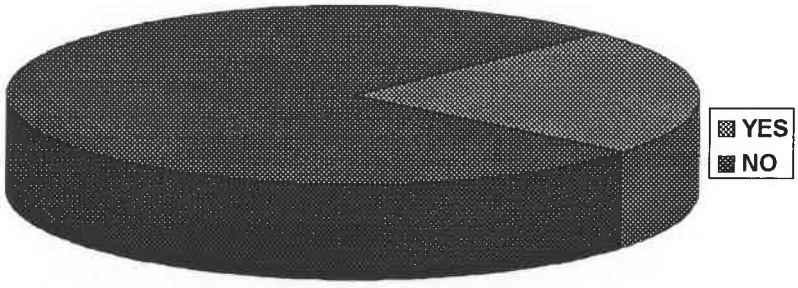


QUESTION 4: Are you female?

MEMBER PROFILE

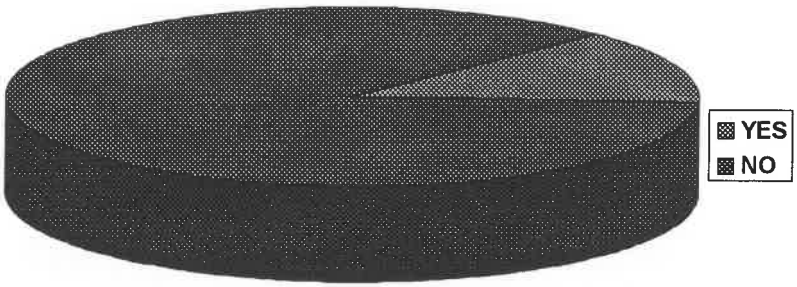
QUESTION 5: Have you been a member for more than five years?

MEMBER PROFILE



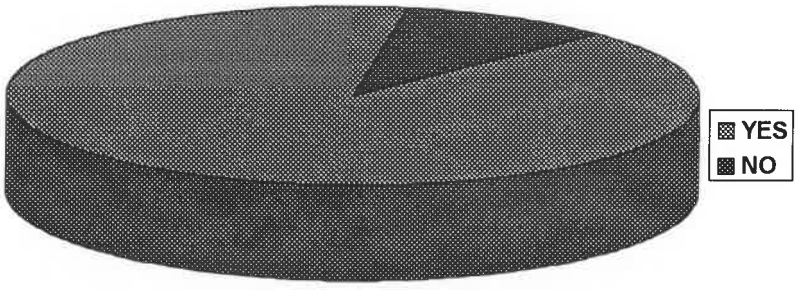
QUESTION 6: Have you been a member for less than five years?

MEMBER PROFILE



QUESTION 7: Are you a second generation member?

MEMBER PROFILE



QUESTION 8: Are you of African descent?

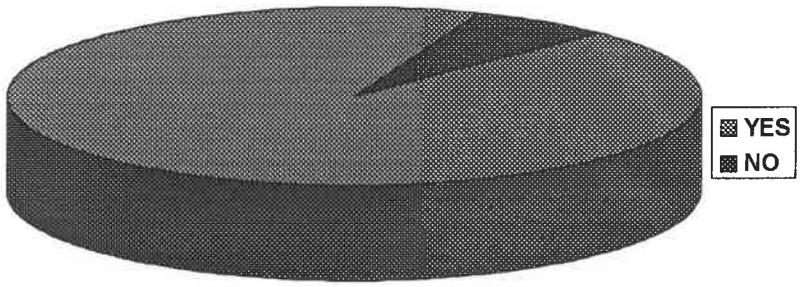
MEMBER PROFILE

QUESTION 9: Are you of European descent?

MEMBER PROFILE

QUESTION 10: Are you Hispanic or other?

MEMBER PROFILE

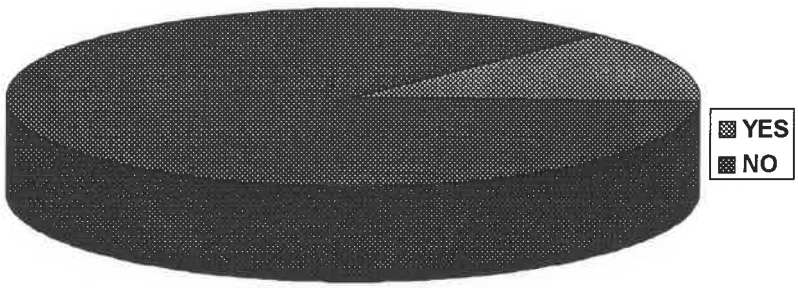


QUESTION 11: Do you have 12 years of school or more?

MEMBER PROFILE

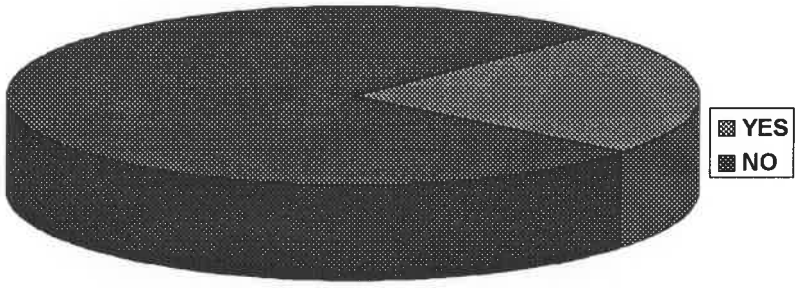
QUESTION 12: Do you have 12 years of school or less?

MEMBER PROFILE



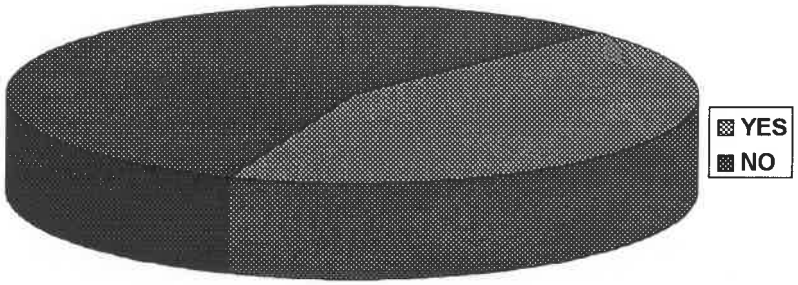
QUESTION 13: Do you have a graduate degree?

MEMBER PROFILE



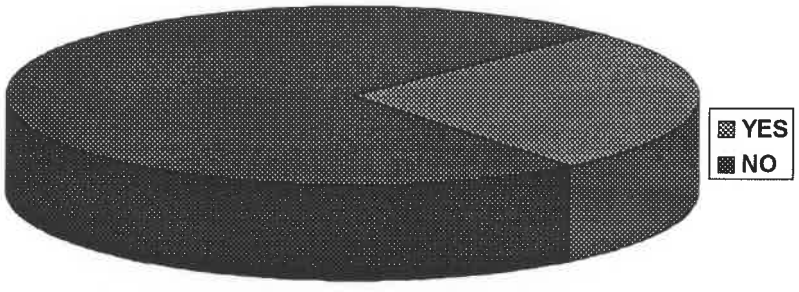
QUESTION 14: Are you between 18 and 30?

MEMBER PROFILE



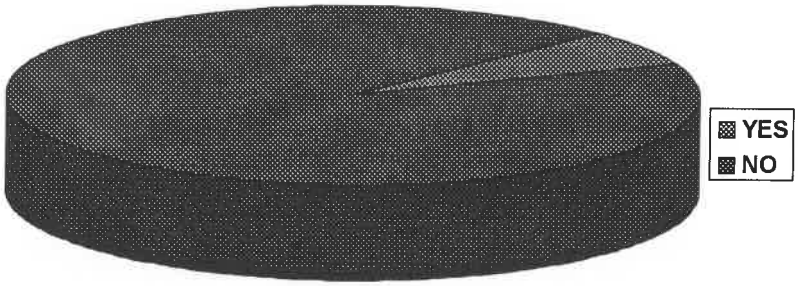
QUESTION 15: Are you between 30 and 45?

MEMBER PROFILE



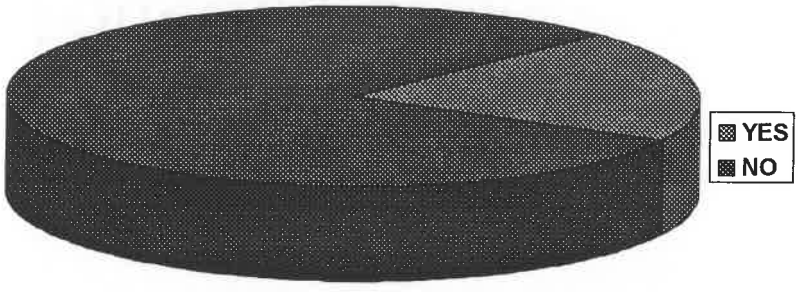
QUESTION 16: Are you between 45 and 60?

MEMBER PROFILE



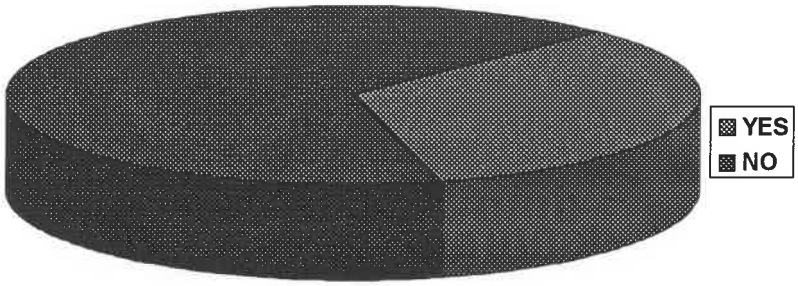
QUESTION 17: Are you over 60?

MEMBER PROFILE



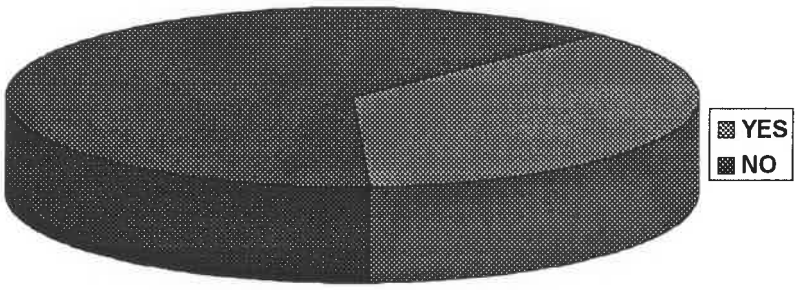
QUESTION 18: Is your annual salary under $20,000?

MEMBER PROFILE



QUESTION 19: Is your annual salary between $20,000 and $30,000?

MEMBER PROFILE

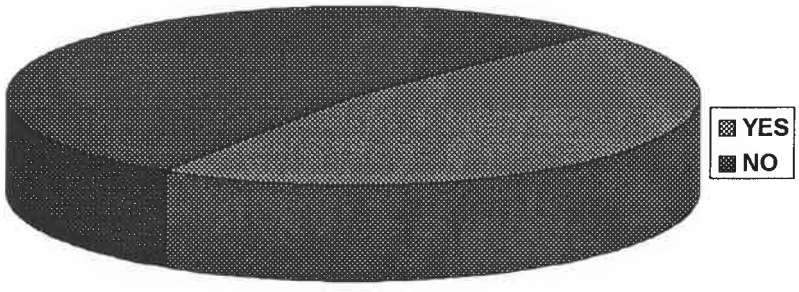


QUESTION 20:Is your annual salary between $30,000 and $50,000?

MEMBER PROFILE

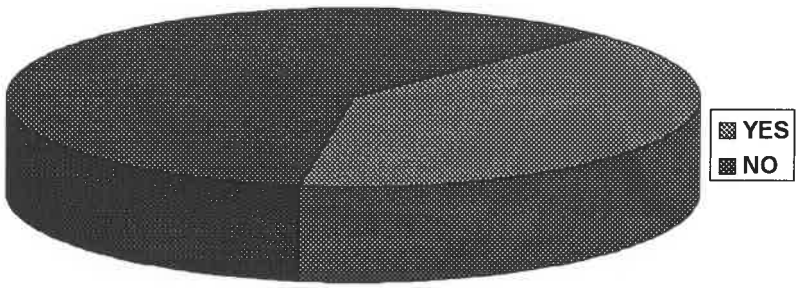
QUESTION 21: Does your annual salary exceed $50,000?

MEMBER PROFILE



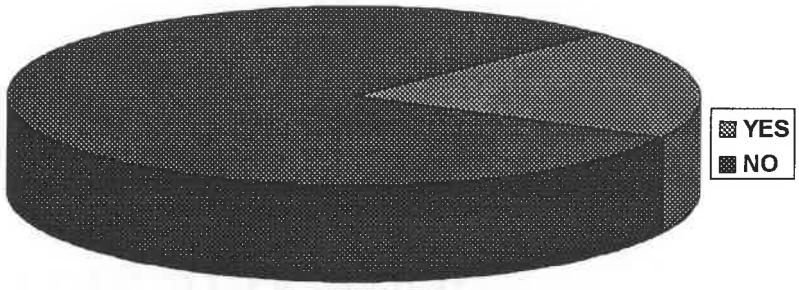
QUESTION 22: Are you married?

MEMBER PROFILE



QUESTION 23: Are you single?

MEMBER PROFILE



QUESTION 24: Are you divorced?

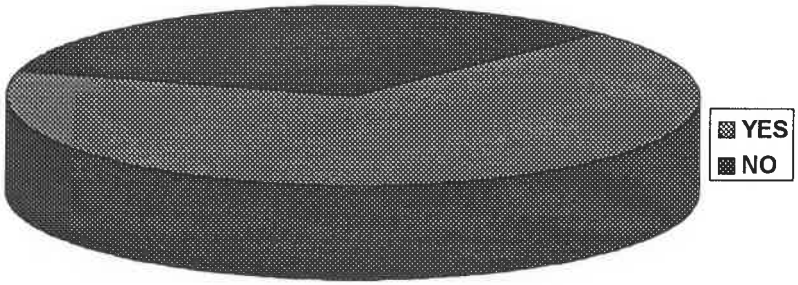
MEMBER PROFILE

QUESTION 25: Are you a widow or widower?

MEMBER PROFILE

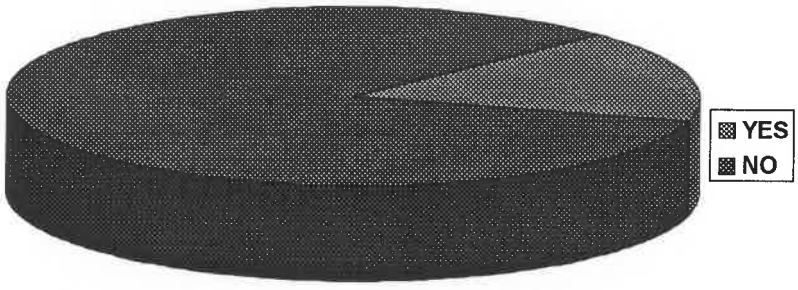
QUESTION 26: Have you been married more than once?

MEMBER PROFILE



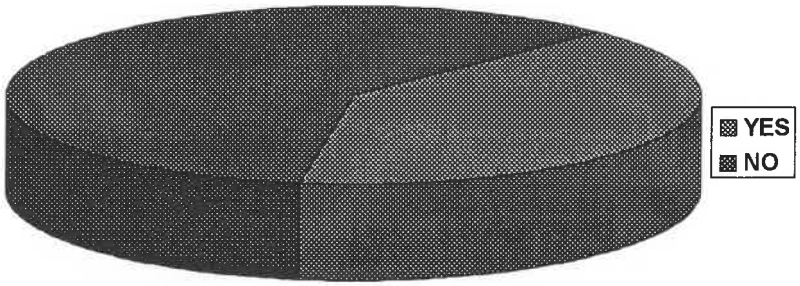
QUESTION 27: Do you have children?

MEMBER PROFILE



QUESTION 28: Do you have grandchildren?

MEMBER PROFILE



QUESTION 29: Are you a leader in any capacity(e.g.. work, school, community, church, etc.)?

APPENDIX 6

CLASS SYLLABUS

Class Syllabus

Course Title: God's Chosen Prophets: Do they lead or follow?

Description: An informative, enlightening classroom experience designed to address Christian issues of the '90's and beyond. Course will specifically focus on questions relevant to transitional leadership on four levels:

1. Biblical
2. Historical
3. Contextual
4. Future Models

Materials: Bible, Notebook, Pen/Pencil and most Important---an Open Mind.

Time: Wednesdays @ 7:30-9:00 P.M. in Room (Fellowship Hall/Basement)

Place: Marsalis Avenue Church of Christ
2431 South Marsalis Ave.
Dallas, Texas 75216

(Presence and Promptness = Proficiency!)

Course Duration: September 10th - November 12, 1996 (10 weeks)

Rewards:

1. Statements, issues and commentary brought forward by you will possibly be utilized in a forthcoming publication.

2. Christian gratification in the completion of course material and knowledge that you have taken personal, evangelistic training to the next level.

APPENDIX 7

SAMPLE OF WEEKLY QUIZ

Sample of Weekly

Quiz

1. Who was the Author?
2. What was the title of his / her work?
3. What question was the author trying to answer?
4. Did the author answer the question ?
5. What method did the author use to answer the question?
6. What is the significance of the author's question?
7. Would you recommend this literature and why?

APPENDIX 8

POST-TEST QUESTIONNAIRE

Post - Test Questionnaire

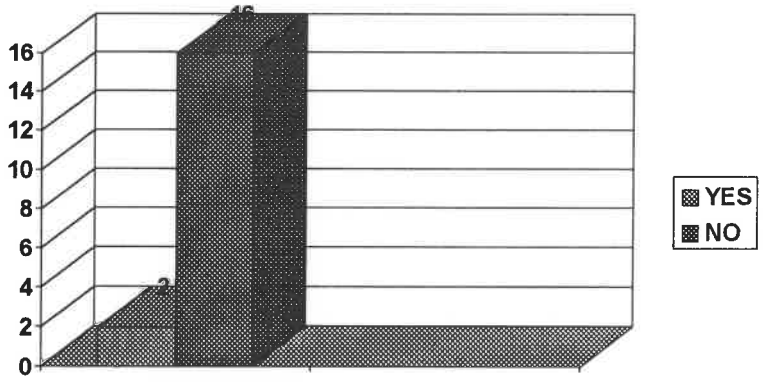
1. After the project, do you now have anxieties about transitions in general?
2. After the project, do you now have anxieties about the transition that has taken place @ MACC?
3. How do you feel now about your ability to handle TICL?
4. How do you feel now about a former minister remaining in the context in an capacity after retirement or resignation?
5. Did sermons impact your attitude on TICL?
6. Did the classes on TICL strengthen your faith in the process?
7. Did open dialogue / discuss strengthen your understanding and confidence in TICL?
8. Did reading literature on leadership in Generation and TICL in particular, enhance your appreciation for the process.
9. Now do you believe the new minister should make changes in the first three years?
10. How confident do you feel that your participation in this project has enhanced your appreciation for a new minister?
11. Did you find the process useful?
12. Now that you've completed the project, do you feel your understanding level is higher?

APPENDIX 9

POST-TEST (GRAPHS/CHARTS)

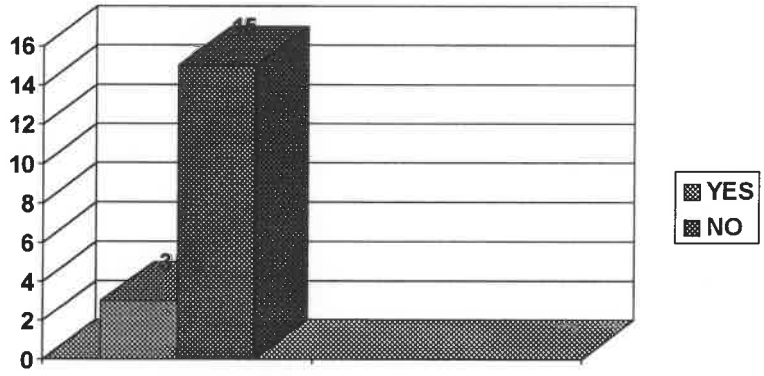
FEMALE POST-TEST

Question 1. After the project, do you now have anxieties about transitions in general?



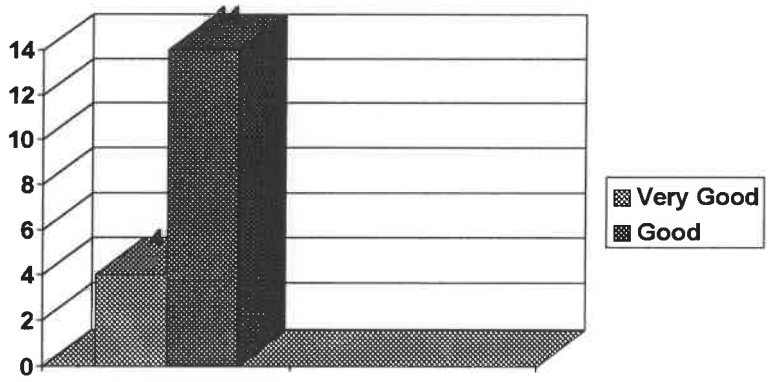
FEMALE POST-TEST

Question 2. After the project, do you now have anxieties about the transition that has taken place at MACC?



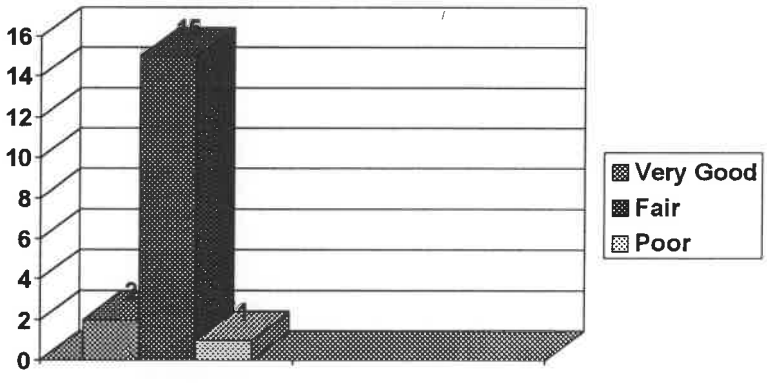
FEMALE POST-TEST

Question 3. How do you feel now about your ability to handle transition in church leadership?



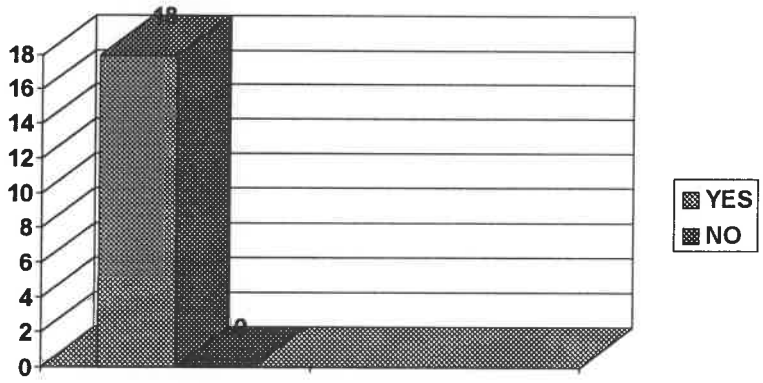
FEMALE POST-TEST

Question 4. How do you feel now about a former minister remaining in the context in any capacity after retirement or resignation?



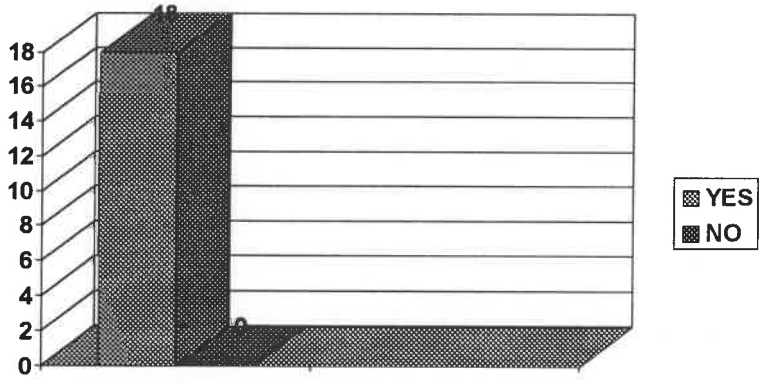
FEMALE POST-TEST

Question 5. Did sermons impact your attitude on transition in church leadership?



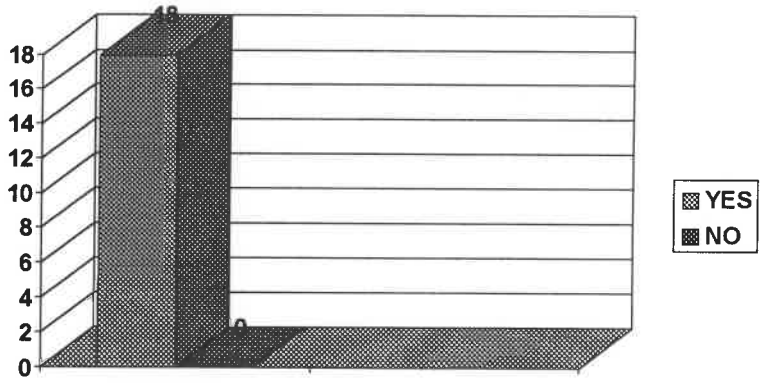
FEMALE POST-TEST

Question 6. Did the classes on transition in church leadership strengthen your faith in the process?



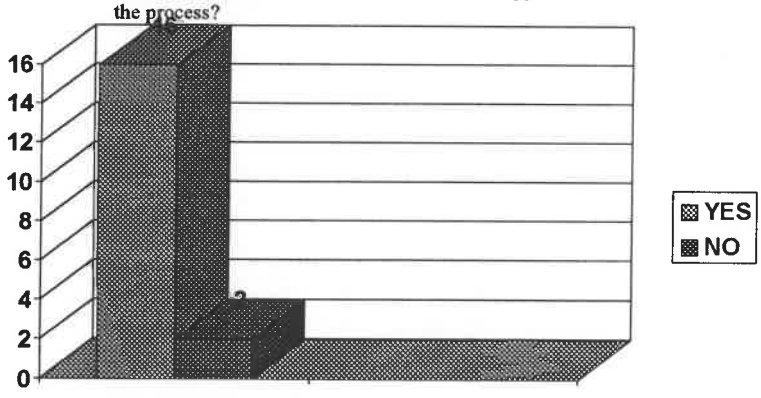
FEMALE POST-TEST

Question 7. Did open dialogue/discussion strrengthen your understanding and confidence in transition in church leadership?



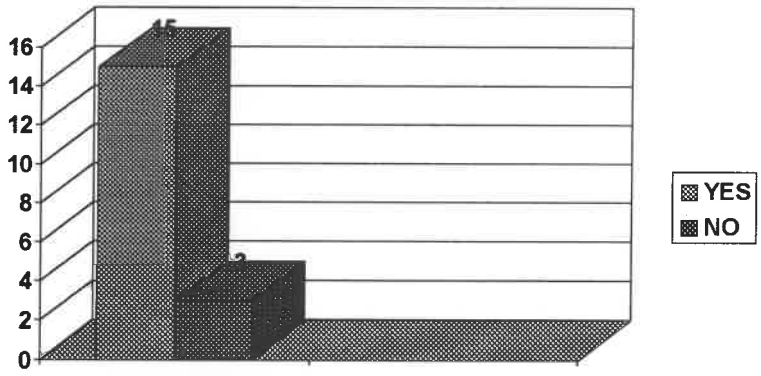
FEMALE POST-TEST

Question 8. Did reading literature on leadership in general and transition in church leadership in particular, enhance your appreciation for the process?



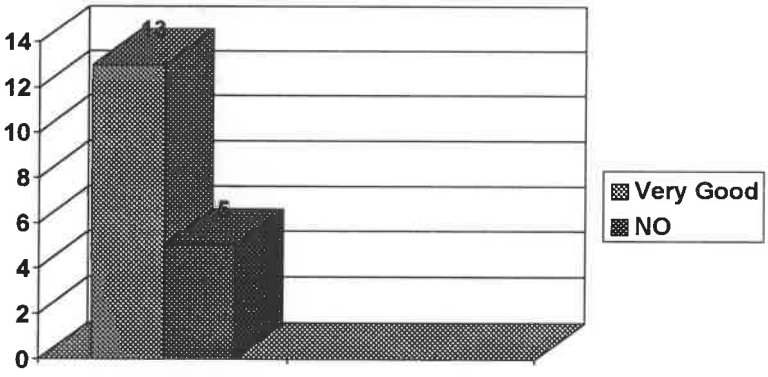
FEMALE POST-TEST

Question 9. Now do you believe the new minister should make changes in the first three years?



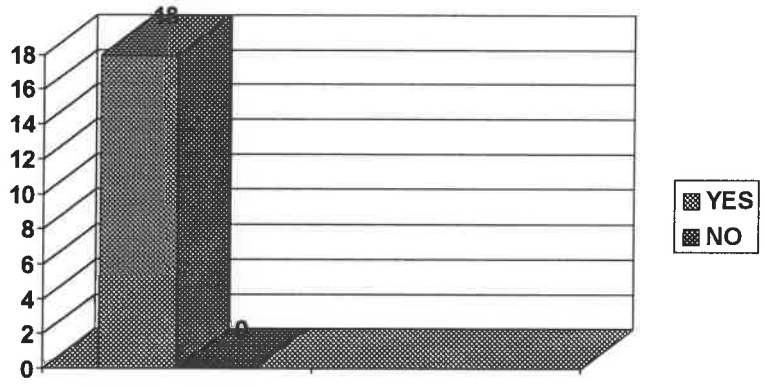
FEMALE POST-TEST

Question 10. How confident do you now feel that your participation in this project has enhanced your appreciation for a new minister?



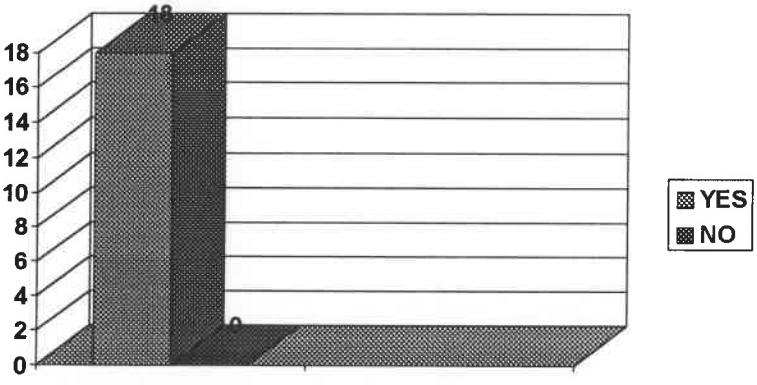
FEMALE POST-TEST

Question 11. Did you find the process useful?



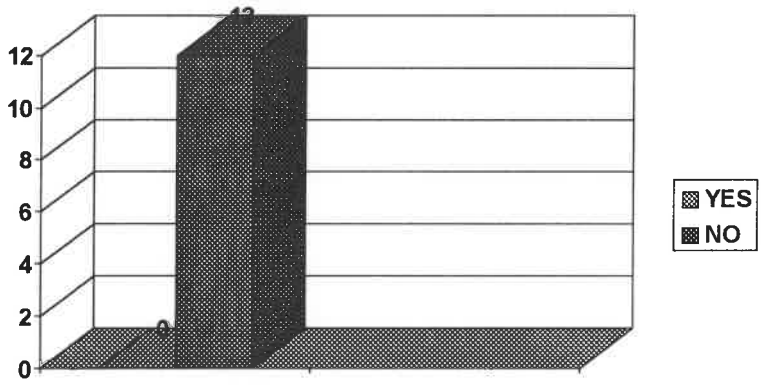
FEMALE POST-TEST

Question 12. Now that you've completed the project, do you feel your understanding level is higher?



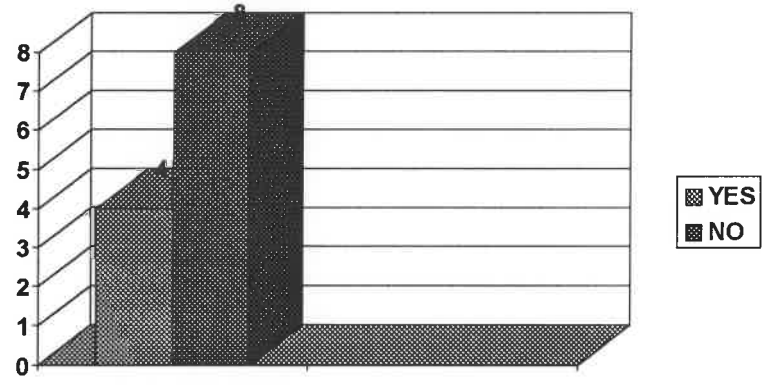
MALE POST-TEST

Question 1. After the project, do you now have anxieties about transitions in general?



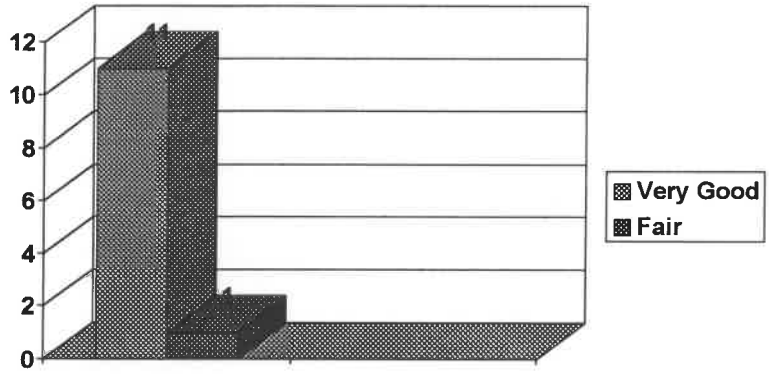
MALE POST-TEST

Question 2. After the project, do you now have anxieties about the transition that has taken place at MACC?



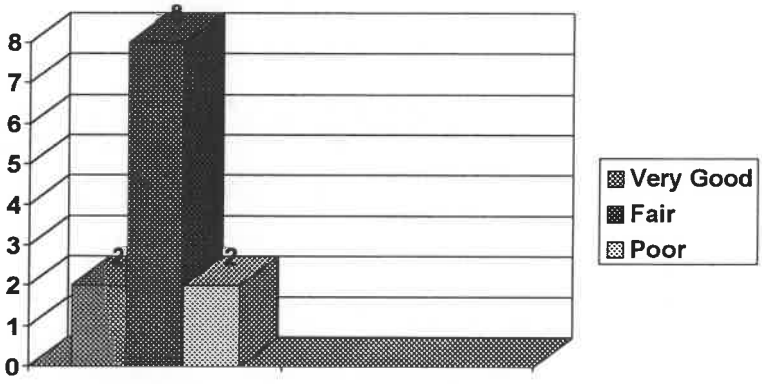
MALE POST-TEST

Question 3. How do you feel now about your ability to handle transition in church leadership?



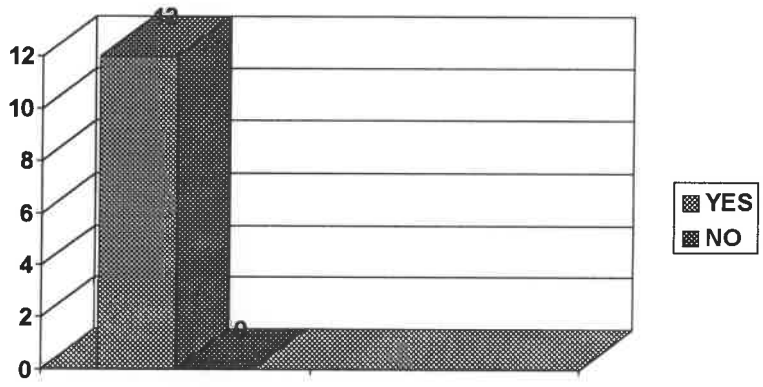
MALE POST-TEST

Question 4. How do you feel now about a former minister remaining in the context in any capacity after retirement or resignation?



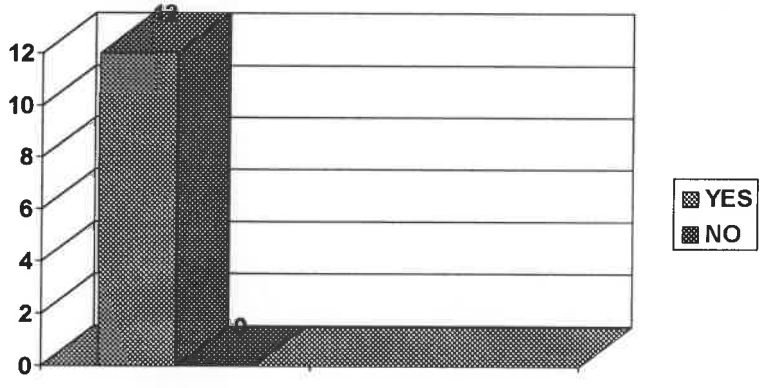
MALE POST-TEST

Question 5. Did sermons impact your attitude on transition in church leadership?



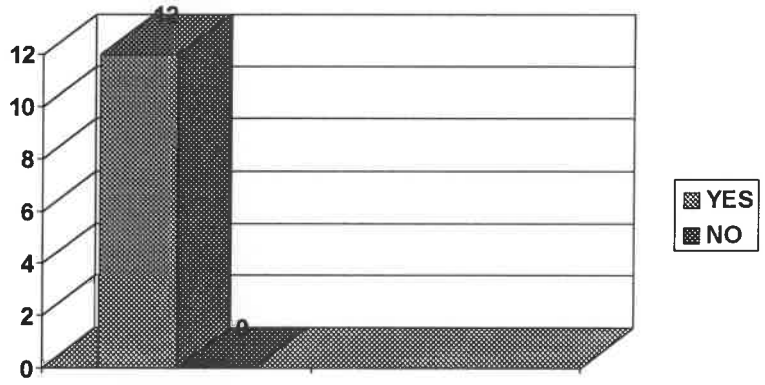
MALE POST-TEST

Question 6. Did the classes on transition in church leadership strengthen your faith in the process?



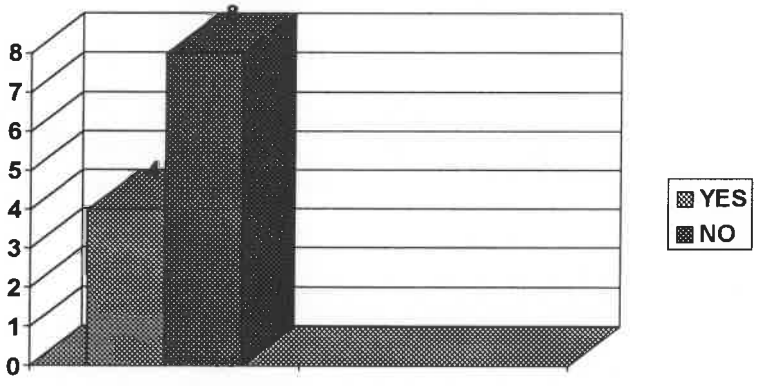
MALE POST-TEST

Question 7. Did open dialogue/discussion strengthen your understanding and confidence in transition in church leadership?



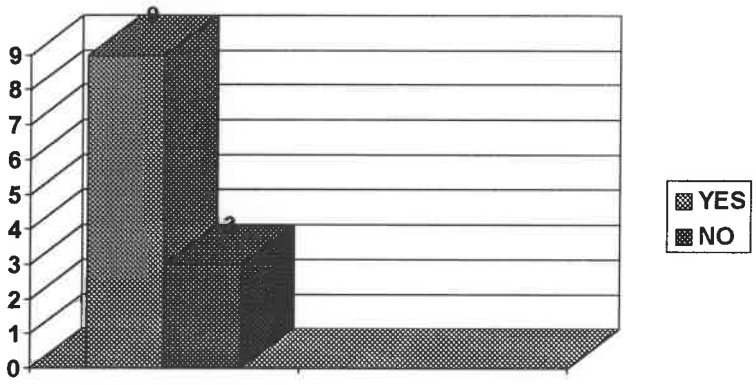
MALE POST-TEST

Question 8. Did reading literature on leadership in general and transition in church leadership in particular, enhance your appreciation for the process?



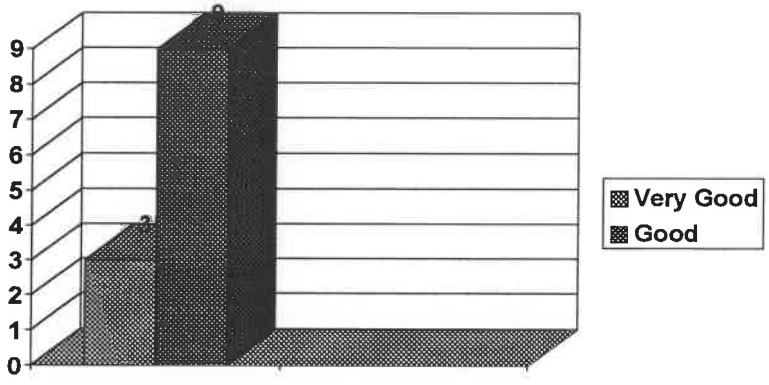
MALE POST-TEST

Question 9. Now do you believe the new minister should make changes in the first three years?



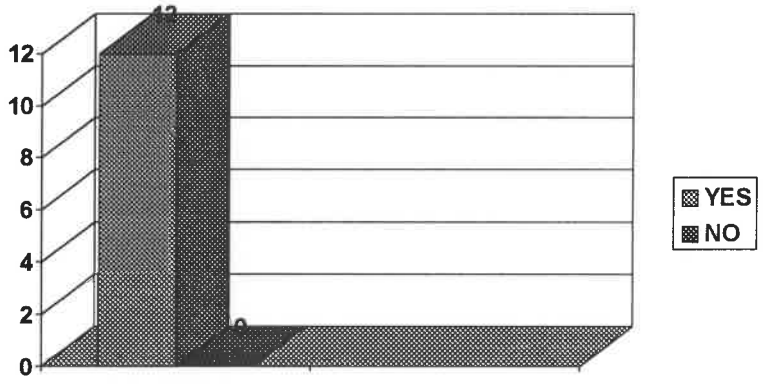
MALE POST-TEST

Question 10. How confident do you now feel that your participation in this project has enhanced your appreciation for a new minister?



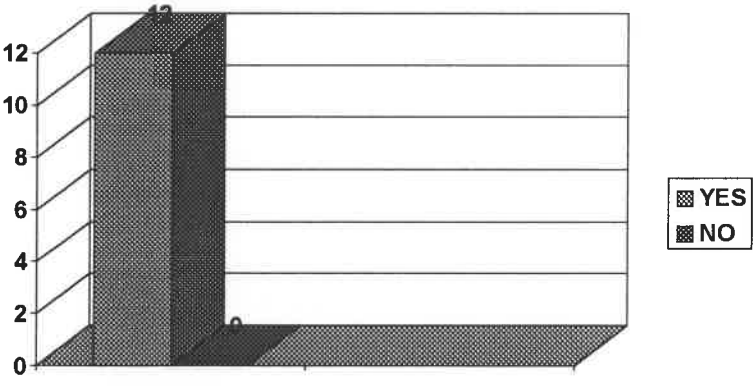
MALE POST-TEST

Question 11. Did you find the process useful?



MALE POST-TEST

Question 12. Now that you've completed the project, do you feel your understanding level is higher?



APPENDIX 10

GENERATION RESPONSES AND BREAKDOWN

GENERATION BREAKDOWN

	PRE-18/30		POST 18-30		PRE 30-45		POST-30/45		PRE-45-60		POST -45-60		PRE-60+		POST-60+	
	YES	*NO*	*YES*	*NO*	*YES*	*NO*	*YES*	*NO*	*YES*	*NO*	*YES*	*NO*	*YES*	*NO*	*YES*	*NO*
1	50%	50.0%	0.0%	100.0%	50.0%	50.0%	7.1%	92.9%	62.5%	37.5%	87.5%	12.5%	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	100.0%
2	83%	16.67%	33.3%	66.7%	85.7%	14.3%	28.6%	71.4%	75.0%	25.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%
	VERY GOOD	*GOOD*	*VERY GOOD*	*GOOD*	*VERY GOOD*	*GOOD*	*VERY GOOD*	*GOOD*	*VERY GOOD*	*GOOD*	*VERY GOOD*	*GOOD*	*VERY GOOD*	*GOOD*	*VERY GOOD*	*GOOD*
3	0.0%	33.3%	66.7%	33.3%	7.1%	35.7%	85.7%	14.3%	0.0%	50.0%	87.5%	12.5%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%
	FAIR	*POOR*	*FAIR*	*POOR*	*FAIR*	*POOR*	*FAIR*	*POOR*	*FAIR*	*POOR*	*FAIR*	*POOR*	*FAIR*	*POOR*	*FAIR*	*POOR*
	50.0%	16.7%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	7.1%	0.0%	0.0%	37.5%	12.5%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	VERY GOOD	*GOOD*	*VERY GOOD*	*GOOD*	*VERY GOOD*	*GOOD*	*VERY GOOD*	*GOOD*	*VERY GOOD*	*GOOD*	*VERY GOOD*	*GOOD*	*VERY GOOD*	*GOOD*	*VERY GOOD*	*GOOD*
4	33.3%	50.0%	0.0%	16.7%	21.4%	64.3%	0.0%	14.3%	12.5%	75.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	50.0%
	FAIR	*POOR*	*FAIR*	*POOR*	*FAIR*	*POOR*	*FAIR*	*POOR*	*FAIR*	*POOR*	*FAIR*	*POOR*	*FAIR*	*POOR*	*FAIR*	*POOR*
	16.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	7.1%	7.1%	71.4%	14.3%	12.5%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%
	YES	*NO*	*YES*	*NO*	*YES*	*NO*	*YES*	*NO*	*YES*	*NO*	*YES*	*NO*	*YES*	*NO*	*YES*	*NO*
5	33%	67%	100.0%	0.0%	57.1%	42.9%	100.0%	0.0%	37.5%	62.5%	100.0%	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%	0.0%
6	67%	33.33%	100.0%	0.0%	57.1%	42.9%	100.0%	0.0%	87.5%	12.5%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%
7	67%	33.33%	100.0%	0.0%	35.7%	64.3%	100.0%	0.0%	87.5%	12.5%	100.0%	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%	0.0%
8	50%	50.00%	66.7%	33.3%	50.0%	50.0%	57.1%	42.9%	25.0%	75.0%	75.0%	25.0%	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%	0.0%
9	50%	50.00%	66.7%	33.3%	7.1%	92.9%	78.6%	21.4%	12.5%	87.5%	100.0%	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	50.0%	50.0%
	VERY GOOD	*GOOD*	*VERY GOOD*	*GOOD*	*VERY GOOD*	*GOOD*	*VERY GOOD*	*GOOD*	*VERY GOOD*	*GOOD*	*VERY GOOD*	*GOOD*	*VERY GOOD*	*GOOD*	*VERY GOOD*	*GOOD*
10	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	50.0%	80.0%	20.0%	42.9%	57.1%	12.5%	50.0%	75.0%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%
	FAIR	*POOR*	*FAIR*	*POOR*	*FAIR*	*POOR*	*FAIR*	*POOR*	*FAIR*	*POOR*	*FAIR*	*POOR*	*FAIR*	*POOR*	*FAIR*	*POOR*
	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	37.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	YES	*NO*	*YES*	*NO*	*YES*	*NO*	*YES*	*NO*	*YES*	*NO*	*YES*	*NO*	*YES*	*NO*	*YES*	*NO*
11	0%	100.00%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%	0.0%
12	83%	16.67%	100.0%	0.0%	92.9%	7.1%	100.0%	0.0%	87.5%	12.5%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%
13	67%	33.33%			85.7%	14.3%			87.5%	12.5%			100.0%	0.0%		

SERMON ONE

When No One Cares

(Psalm 142:1-7)

Psalm 142 is really a psalm for protection. It is truly a cry for divine deliverance. The writer of this psalm and prayer is David. David is the son of Jesse, of the tribe of Benjamin. But David is most notably known for conquering Goliath and for being crowned king of Israel. These two mountaintop experiences stand out in his life more so than anything else. First, there was the mountaintop experience of conquering Goliath, and then, there was the mountaintop experience of being crowned king. But anytime you have two mountains side-by-side, you have to have a valley in the middle, because it is geographically impossible to go from one mountaintop to another. And between David's conquest of Goliath and his being crowned king of Israel, this prayer indicates he went through a valley experience.

Isn't' that just like life? Life is not a series of continuous highs. Life has highs *and* lows. Life is not a series of continuous ups--life has ups *and* downs. Life is not all joy. Life has joy *and* pain. Life is not all sunshine. Life has sunshine and rain, mountains and valleys. And that's exactly what was going on in David's life. Between his two mountains, David had a valley experience. All of us are going to have to go through some valleys. If you haven't had any trouble, just keep on living. Jesus tells us in Matthew 7, everybody falls into three groups of people: those that have just gone through a storm, those that are in

the midst of a storm and those that are about to go through a storm. God has had only one son who has known no sin, but God hasn't had any children who have known no suffering. If you'll read Is. 53 you'll discover that Jesus was a man of sorrows, who was acquainted with grief. He was wounded, bruised and whipped with many stripes. In Luke 23 and 31, Jesus reminds us that if they'll do these things to a green tree, then imagine what they will do to an old dried up withered one. He summed it up best in John 16 and 33 by saying: "You shall have tribulation." We are all going to go through something. And since that is inevitable, David warns us that we can not run from trouble because it knows your address, zip code and where you are. And since you cannot run from trouble, then you must have the right response to it. First and foremost, you are not going to be able to avoid trouble.

David is faced with this very situation in this passage--Psalm 142. Maybe some of us do not know what's going on in this passage of scripture, so the first thing I want to do is give a description of David's dilemma. In the King James Version of Psalm 142, there is a little title above it that says: A Prayer When He Was In The Cave. In I Samuel 22 we learn that David is on the run from King Saul. He is running for his life. And as he's running, he's trying to get away from his troubles and trials. But David soon discovers that he cannot run, so he ends up in a cave. The reason David is on the run--Saul was after him. Now let me set the scene. If you remember in I Samuel 17 when David conquered Goliath, it brought victory to the children of Israel against the Philistines. This astonishing victory excited and enthused their king at the time--a man by the name of Saul. But that excitement and enthusiasm soon turned to another "e"—envy

y. And the reason King Saul became envious, rather than excited was because the women in the kingdom began to sing a new song. That new song is found in I Samuel 18:7 and it cheers both--Saul for slaying his thousands, and David for slaying his ten thousands. Soon, Saul became jealous and worried. First, he was jealous because the females were joyously singing about someone other than him. Secondly, he was worried about his future as king of Israel. Saul thought his subjects might take this new hero--David, and make him their king. So out of his jealousy and worry, Saul decided he would kill David.

David starts running, knowing that the king and his henchmen are after him. What does David's retreat to the cave teach us? You cannot run from trouble, so you need to be equipped with the right response. What was David's response? And how do we handle it when we go through different trials and tribulations? The first thing that David shows us is that when we go through what we have to go through, there must be a discussion with the divine. Yes, brothers and sisters, you've got to have a little talk with Jesus. You do not have to take my word for it. Just look at how David opened his prayer in v.1 of Ps 142: "I cried unto the Lord with my voice." When David said he cried, he's not talking about tears coming down from his eyes and falling down his cheeks. When he said, "I cried," David was actually saying he had talked to God in a loud voice. Not everyone can do this. Some pray silently. Some whisper. There is a way of carrying yourself in a prayerful attitude, that will allow you to pray without ceasing (I Thessolonians 5:17). But sometimes you go through some stuff that cannot be expressed in silence. Yes, I know that God hears me when I pray silently and he also hears me when I whisper. But sometimes, I feel like David. Sometimes God, I just need to talk to you out loud! Do not look at me like I'm

crazy. There are times when you want to deal with God out loud. David said: "I cried with a loud voice."

Now, let's make it clear in verse 2, when David said, "I poured out my complaint," what he is talking about. When David made this statement, he doesn't mean he fussed with God. There is something known in biblical interpretation as parallel phrases. Anytime you have parallel phrases, it means the second phrase defines the first phrase. Or, quite simply, when you read something you are not sure of in the first phrase, the second one tells you what it means. For example, in verse 2 of Psalm 142, it says, "I poured out my complaint before him." What he really means is--he showed God his trouble and shared with God what he was going through and finally, he talked it over with God. Remember, David did not tell God these things because God did not know. God knew. I know that God knew, because in the very next verse--verse three, it says: "Then thou knewest my path." As a matter of fact, in Psalm 139 David said, " God knowest my downsitting and mine uprising. God knows my thought afar off." The darkness and the light are the same to God. I can not hide anything. God already knows. Then why am I telling him? I'm not telling God because God doesn't know. I'm telling God because of what prayer can do. The trials we go through in our daily lives do not sneak up on God. But God wants us to tell him about it because of what prayer can do.

But do you know what most of us do? We pour out our complaint to somebody else. We tell everybody *but* God. We tell our family, our friends, our preacher, physician, attorney or psychiatrist. We tell our counselor, psychic, soothsayer or astrologer. We tell Oprah,

Phil, Montel, Rick, or Sally Jessye Raphael. We tell everybody but God. But I dare you--in a loud voice--to pour out your complaint before the Lord. You'll soon see there is something about having a discussion with The Divine.

But what happens when you have a discussion with the divine and you've given a description of the dilemma, and you are still in a mess. The answer is simple. When No (wo)man can help, and no one seems to care, I'm here to tell you just as loudly that when man falls through, that's when God comes through. And God comes through by showing up. And when he[sic] shows up, he[sic] always shows out. I dare you to just trust in God. I think I better call some witnesses in here.....Come here Moses. He had the Red Sea in front and Pharoah's army behind, along with mountains and hills on either side. Then God showed up. Let's call Daniel. They threw him in the lion's den and thought it was all over. Then God showed up. Can you hear me Haniniah? Come here Mechel and Azariah. Let me call you by your nicknames. Come here Shadrach, Meshach and Abendego. They threw you in the fiery furnace and there were only three of you. But even the king said: "I see four--and the fourth one looks like the son of God." God showed up. Come Paul, come Silas. You have been praying all day and all night. And now, it is midnight, and when we can hold on a little longer, God will show up. Come here Ervin Seamster--on your way to hell without God on your side and no shoes on your feet. Now you are preaching the gospel. Why is that? God showed up.

If you've ever been sick and could not get well, but you are here today, you know God showed up. Somebody in here was down to their last dime and did not know how they

were going to pay their bills and feed their family. But now they call you 'Big Bank Hank'. Do you know why? Because God showed up.

Psalm 142 and verse 7 says: "That I may praise your name." Anytime God shows up, it is the right response. You did not get where you are on your own. You did not make it all by yourself. You could not pick yourself up by your bootstraps when you did not have any boots. Whenever God brings you through, you ought to praise his name. If he heals your body, praise his name. When God gives you another chance, praise his name. When God walks by your side, praise his name. When God helps you pay your bills, praise his name. When God saves your soul, praise his name. When God fills you with the spirit, you ought to praise his name. If God woke you up this morning, praise his name. What I have, God gave me. That's why I praise his name. What I know he brought me, and taught me. I constantly praise his name.

SERMON TWO

You've Been Around This Mountain

Long Enough

(Deut. 28:1-14; 1:1-7)

Our passage, this morning, is a part of what biblical scholars refer to as deuteronomistic history. And this history, to a large extent, explicates Moses' farewell sermon, or sermons, because the book of Deuteronomy is composed of a number of his sermons. Our text represents the last sermon of a dying preacher--a preacher who has led a people for as long as he was assigned to lead them. And he must now say goodbye to them. The book of Deuteronomy is Moses' farewell sermons to his congregation, people he has lead for more than 40 long years.

The book of Deuteronomy is more than just Moses' words of encouragement. Those words also serve as reminders and as criticism to the people that they must prepare to go on without Moses, who insisted they go on ahead. In this last sermon, which consists of some 34 chapters, Moses takes the occasion to summarize, remind, command, to caution, and to counsel.

According to the book of Deuteronomy, Moses was, one of, if not, the greatest prophet of Israel. In fact, the book ends by saying: "And there has arisen no greater prophet in Israel

than Moses, for he was a man the Lord knew face to face." And it was indeed, through Moses, that the Lord wrought great wonders and signs by bringing us out of Egypt. Moses was a man unlike any of the other prophets who hear God--but not see God. Moses would stand out in biblical history because he was the only prophet who knew God, and saw God--face to face. He was, in other words, on speaking terms with God. He did not have to go ask someone else to pray for him. He could pray to God for himself. Moses knew how to look at God. He knew when to look at God. And above all, he knew where to look for God.

The bible tells us in Exodus 3 that on one occasion when Moses went up to see God, his whole countenance was changed when he returned. When you've been in the presence of God, your whole countenance changes. Your facial expression changes. Your attitude changes. You come in sour, and you leave refreshed. You come in bitter and distracted, and you leave focused and strengthened. When you have really encountered God, and tasted, touched and felt God, then there will be something very different about you. And you'll understand why the things you used to do, you do not anymore. When you can come here and leave here with the same stinch on you, or the same ugly attitude, the same problems, you have not encountered God. Moses stands out in biblical history because he was a man who had, indeed, encountered God face to face.

Moses counsels his followers to go on and follow Joshua to the promised land. He urged them to not focus on him, or undermine the new leadership. Moses, in fact, told them he wanted them to go on. But Moses did ask that they remember some things, including

where they had come from. When you are going up against difficulties, sometimes the only thing that you have is your memory. You have got to remember that it hasn't always been like this. You have got to remember that it will not always be like this.

And you've got to remember what God has done for you. Sometimes your memory is all you have--your memory of what God has done for you, and your memory of what God will do for you. Just as you should today, Moses urged his people to remember all the ways in which the Lord has lead us between Elem and Sinai. He even provided examples, asking that they never forget how the Lord gave water from a rock and how He defeated the king of the Amorites, and the king of Ba-shan, by the name of Og. Oh yes, the Lord has been good to us. God has brought us from a mighty long way. We've been up. We've been down --almost level to the ground. I want you to look back and see how far you've come. I want you to know we have bore our burdens in the heat of the day. And we have found, time after time, the Lord will make a way, somehow. But you've got to remember.

Moses provided countless reasons for his people to remember the goodness of the Lord. He told them to remember that in 40 years time, their clothes never wore out. They all had shoes. None of their feet swell. Imagine walking from Egypt to the Red Sea to Sinai and to all of the various mountains, and not having your feet swell! I want you to remember that God has been good to you. How good? You may not have had a split level house, but one level that has done the job. God has been good to you. You may not have had a Mercedes, but that Ford has been good to you. You may have had to wear poly and ester, but it is been good to you. You haven't been eating caviar all your life, but remember

those neck bones were good to you. Just remember from whence you came, and where God has brought you.

Moses then tells the people to remember all that he's saying because once they get to the promised land, they're going to have a tendency to get the big head, or all puffed up. Moses even told them they would think they had arrived because of something they did. Moses wisely advised them that when entering the promised land not to think in their hearts that it is because of their own righteousness that the Lord had given the land. In v.8, he says, "It will be because the Lord loves you--and because the Lord is keeping the covenant which the Lord God swore to your ancestors: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Do not think that when you get into the promised land that it is because of your own goodness, or your L.A.S.T. scores. Do not think it is because of your G.R.E. scores or because you've graduated at the top of the class. Do not think when you get into the promised land that it is because you slipped into SMU, and slipped out of SMU. Do not think that the reason you got the best job at the First Bank of Texas is because of your righteousness. Do not think it is because of all your degrees, or your own righteousness. But remember, it is because God is keeping covenant with your ancestors. God is remembering your grandmother's prayers. God is remembering your grandfather's prayers, and his daddy's prayers, who lived a slave, died a slave and who prayed that the Lord will bless his children and his children's children. That's why God has opened that door. God is keeping a covenant with your ancestors. Remember your moma used to pay her? tithe tenth after washing that other woman's floor? God is blessing your moma's prayer. Some

may actually think it is because they know which knife and fork to use. You think it is because you know not to put your elbows under the table. You know how to dress and you know hot to walk. But it is not because of any of these things, and certainly not because of you. It is because of those four, little girls who were bombed in that Birmingham church that God is keeping the covenant.

Moses goes on to say something that we have all heard: if the truth be told, as good as God has been to us, we still have not been as faithful as we ought to. We've been disobedient, slothful and impatient. Moses talked constantly about how God has been good, and we have murmured every step of the way. And because of our murmuring, our infidelity, a journey that could have taken eleven days has winded up taking 40 years. A journey that could have taken eleven days from the Red Sea to the promised land has taken 40 long, hard years. Why? Because we have murmured, complained, and not obeyed or trusted God. So do not blame Moses, or your minister. If the truth be told, it is because of your disobedience. You can not say God has not been good to us. It is because we have been murmuring every step of the way. We have insisted on doing it our way. We have refused to trust God. Can you hear them? Yes, it is good here on Mt Horeb, but we are living on the periphery of our blessings. We're on the wrong side of the mountain. We have gotten comfortable, here, living beneath what God wants to give to us. This is good, but this is not the promised land. He says because of your murmuring, complaining, and disobedience and indifference, a journey that should have taken eleven days ends up taking 40 years. What about us? I tell you we have been murmuring and complaining and when we were at the Red Sea we saw what God did for us. No sooner had God blessed us in the

palace than we get to the Red Sea and complain. And God parted the Red Sea, and we still complained! And you know how black folk are--we'll find something to murmur and complain about. Us ain't got enough out here and us need some mo' water. And us rather be slaves in Egypt than free with God.

There were so many complaining tongues that God wanted to kill them. But Moses went before God and said: " God do not destroy them. God do not kill them." God must have listened because God just blessed them. Moses stood up for them, and God blessed them because Moses did stand. Thank God for somebody who will stand in the gap for you and pray over your foolishness. But no sooner than we have seen what God can do, we forget and start complaining about this and that. Our memories are so short. Remember how God paid that bill? Remember how God held that marriage together? Remember how God provided that job for you? And now, you do not want this and you do not want that.

It was a journey that was supposed to take 11 days, and it wound up taking 40 years. You have been around this mountain long enough. What should have been a temporary setback or disappointment became a way of existence. What should have been a detour, instead became a destiny. What was a heartache has become your home. What became a problem has become your palace. You began to live there and dwell there. You know folk when they come in, but you do not even want to ask them how they're doing. they always have a problem. It should have been just a temporary heartache. You know he broke your heart ten years ago, and now you do not want to be married ever again. A heartache has become your home. It is like the songwriter says: I've been down so long, getting up never

crossed my mind. You have got to decide not to be depressed anymore. You have got to come to a point where you just say I'm sick and tired of being sick and tired. You have got to stop blaming everybody else except yourself. Stop blaming the Amelekites and Egyptians. Stop blaming Moses and the leadership. There comes a time when we have to stop take the blame for ourselves. I did this to me. I am the reason why. I have disobeyed God. Many of you wouldn't be in the mess that you are in now, if you had sought God's advice. You wouldn't be in the marriage that you are in now, if you had just trusted God. But you've made your bed. You have been around this mountain too long.

I do not know about you, but I'm tired of complaining. I'm tired of murmuring. You have been around this mountain long enough. Being satisfied with being satisfied--satisfied with living on the periphery of blessing. If you are on welfare, and your moma was on welfare, and it looks like your children are going to be on welfare, then you've been around this mountain long enough. If you are a member of the church and you gave a dollar five years ago, and you still giving five dollars, then you've been around this mountain long enough.

SERMON THREE

This That I Have—The World Did not Give To Me And The World Can not Take It Away (Numbers 14:23-24)

I heard a preacher tell the story of a tragic car accident that involved a pitcher for the Cleveland Indians. He was driving his truck, lost control, and crossed over a median. He ran into a tree, head on and was thrown around in his truck. He died. But there was someone else in that truck with him. And that person only suffered minor cuts and bruises. I was wondering how could two people be in the same truck, at the same time, hit the same tree and experience the same tragedy. One is left with minor injuries, while the other one is dead. Same accident. Same truck. Same tragedy. One is destroyed. But the other is delivered. I wanted to know how that could be. But as I continued to listen to him I discovered that the passenger had something the driver did not have. He had his seat belt on. He had something to secure him. He had something to hold him. And that's what's going on in Numbers 13 and 14.

They returned with their report as 12 spies spied out the land of Canaan and they came back with confirmation that everything was just as God as said it would be—a land flowing with milk and honey. It was rich. It was real. And it was refreshing. Ten of the twelve gave their majority report by saying it is all there, but they also reported they could not have it! Now understand, the children of Israel have already been released from their

bondage in Egypt. They have already traveled through the Red Sea and their wilderness experience. Now they are at the brink of the Jordan River and there is only one river that stands between them and their blessing. They can almost taste the milk and the honey. The spies have already returned out of Numbers, chapter 13 and verse 25. They were saying we can not have it because the walls of the city are too strong. They were saying our enemies are stronger than we are. They were saying the enemy looked like giants, while they felt like grasshoppers. So, the majority report was, we can not have it.

Then came the minority report from Caleb and Joshua. They said the ten were right, and also confirmed it was just as God had said. But there report was different because they disagreed with the majority. Why? Because they did not have the grasshopper complex. Instead, these two said we can have it because God said so. They knew because anybody that God inhabits—no one can inhibit. They knew because when God is above you and in you, nothing around you can stop you. And we know because when you focus on eternal, and God is internal, nothing external can stop us. We know because John said: "Greater is he that is in me than he that is in the world." We know because if God said it, that settles it. We can have what God has in store for us. But because the children of Israel went along with the ten spies, verse 23 of Numbers 14 says: "You will not even see the land." The reasons they would never see what was promised was clear—they did not trust God and provoked God to anger.

Now, watch what's going on in Numbers 14. People are dying and the children of Israel are being defeated. They are being destroyed. Even though God is angry, his servant Caleb

is sent in. The last verse in chapter 14 says they have been pushed all the way back to Hermah. H mah means total destruction. There are a lot of people dying and a lot of people are being defeated. But not Caleb. Verse 24 says Caleb is being delivered. How can so many people go through the same thing and be destroyed, while Caleb is delivered? The answer is in verse 24. Caleb had another spirit.

Have you ever wondered how somebody can go through what you go through and deal with the same difficulty, problems in their marriage, problems in the community and the same stuff you go through, and come out differently? But you are ready to throw in the towel and give up. You are devastated. They walk around delivered, developed and in delight. What's the difference between you and them? It may be, they have something that you do not have. All of us are going to have pain and problems. But do you have what it takes to face yours? Let us look at Caleb. Caleb was in the same bondage in Egypt and faced the same bruises from the enemy. Caleb faced the same opposition and the same oppression. But Caleb was delivered, because he had another spirit. This other spirit is not the Holy Spirit. It refers to Caleb's disposition. It is about an unseen reality beneath the skin. The bottom line is, Caleb has a different attitude.

How does sin factor into this attitude picture? First, there is the sin of omission. There is also the sin of commission. And then there is the sin of disposition. That means, you can have the wrong attitude and mentality about what you go through and the things you must go through. Have you ever seen someone who is always mean? That's a bad disposition. When the scripture talks about another spirit, it is really talking about what Caleb had on

the inside. Disposition deals with the fact that Caleb had a mind that knew God. Caleb had emotions that would love and trust God, as well as the will to always obey God. And because Caleb had his disposition together, he was able to handle whatever he had to face. Most of us are concerned with what we have on us. That's accumulation. And then there are others concerned with who we have around us. That's association. But Caleb had it on the inside. That's inspiration. I do not care what you have on you, or who you have around. If you do not have something in you, you will certainly be destroyed, while others are delivered. Caleb learned how to live life from the inside out, not from the outside in. And that's what stood out about Caleb.

How many of us can identify with Caleb's disposition—his attitude and spirit? And understand something, when you have the right spirit as you face your difficulties, you will remain focused in the midst of controversy. When you have the kind of spirit that Caleb had, you can then understand why he was restricted from fitting the crowd. Caleb had a certain spirit in him that caused him to remain focused in controversy and thus, enabled him to relay to the future of his children. In verse 24 of Numbers 14, it says: But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land where unto he went and his seed shall possess it. Now listen closely. He's already gone to the land. God is going to let him go back to the land where he has already been with assurances for his seed. Here's what's going on. Caleb has a certain spirit that makes sure that the future of his children will be set. God is telling him in this particular passage that his children will end up where he has already been.

Do not you know that our children have a way of showing up in places we just left? That makes me wonder, where have you been? Where do you spend your time? What places do you frequent? The passage says our children are going to go where we have already been. Then it says, our children shall possess it. His children are going to get what he has. Someone said the traits of the parents become the tendencies of the children. That means your children may not do the same things that you do, but they will struggle with those things. They are going to catch what you have. And you can turn those negatives into positives. Do you know that Christianity is contagious? That means if you have, folks can catch it. And if they can not catch it, you do not have it. If you got something, your children can get something. We've got to be able, as Caleb did, to relay some things unto our children.

Caleb had a spirit in him that recognized that the generation coming behind him would have a great need and that he would have to be able to pass something on. I used to run track. I ran the 4x100 and I was the one who ran the first leg. In other words, I started the race. My job was not to cross the finish line. My job was to give an advantage to those coming behind me. I would never be able to cross the finish line. I would never be able to achieve what the one behind me will achieve. But that was not my purpose. My job was to give an advantage to the three coming behind me. And so I needed to get a good start and try to keep the lead. Remember, I'm trying to give the others an advantage, so they can win the race. Someone may be asking, preacher, what does that have to do with relaying

some things unto our children? I want to show you how, as we run this Christian race, we can give either an advantage, or a disadvantage to those coming behind us.

Several factors can mess up the race. We can start too fast. If we start too slow, then our competitors have the advantage. It is crucial that we take off just at the right time. In other words, there is a time and a season for everything. And you've got to learn how to move when God says move. If God says move, take off. If God says wait, wait on the Lord. Because they that wait on the Lord.....You have got to move on God's time. Sometimes we can ruin a race by getting in someone else's lane. You know when that happens, you are disqualified. And not only are you disqualified when that happens, so are the others on your relay team. They do not have a chance if you do not run a straight race. Too many of us live crooked lives.

And what we have got to learn how to do is, run a straight race. That means there are places you can go and things you can not do. We've got to learn how to run the race, in Hebrews 11, that is set before us. If I drop the baton, the others will be at a disadvantage. You see, I have to hold on to what I have, so I can pass it on the next generation.

God has blessed us with greatness. If God gave you salvation, hold on to it. If God gave you a good mind, hold on to it. If God gave you opportunity, hold on to it. If God gave you some joy, hold on to it. If God gave you another chance, hold on to it. Because if you drop it, the children behind us will not have anything to work with. This is a relay, and our job is to give an advantage to those coming behind us. This is the relay of life. In the

4x100, I used to run the first leg. But in the relay of life I do not run the first leg, or the last leg. I know that somebody has gone on before me. I also do not believe this is the last leg. I believe others are going to get more out of life that I got. That's because I'm going to make a good hand-off. Yes, I thank God for those who went on before me. They gave something to me. Thank God for the generation that gave us a good hand-off. I can eat in any restaurant I want to eat in, if I have the money. Thank God for a good hand-off! I can go to any school that I want to, if I have the mind and the money. Thank God for a good hand-off. I can live in any neighborhood I want to, if I have the money. Blood, sweat and tears were shed to make room for me. Thank God for a good hand-off. I'd be a fool to drop the baton now. So, I'm going to hold on to my blessings. I'm going to hold on to the good start they gave me. Because I know there is a generation coming after me, and I want to give them an advantage. The advantage that I have—the world did not give it to me. This advantage that I have—fire can not burn it and water can not drown it. Death can not kill it. Congress can not legislate it. Presidents can not veto it. Thunder can not shake it and lightning can not strike it. The advantage that I have—the world did not give it to me, and the world can not take it away.

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